NOTES ON THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

AN EVER INCREASING COLLECTION OF NOTES, LINKS, SOURCES AND OBSERVATIONS

COLLECTIVIZED + COMPILED

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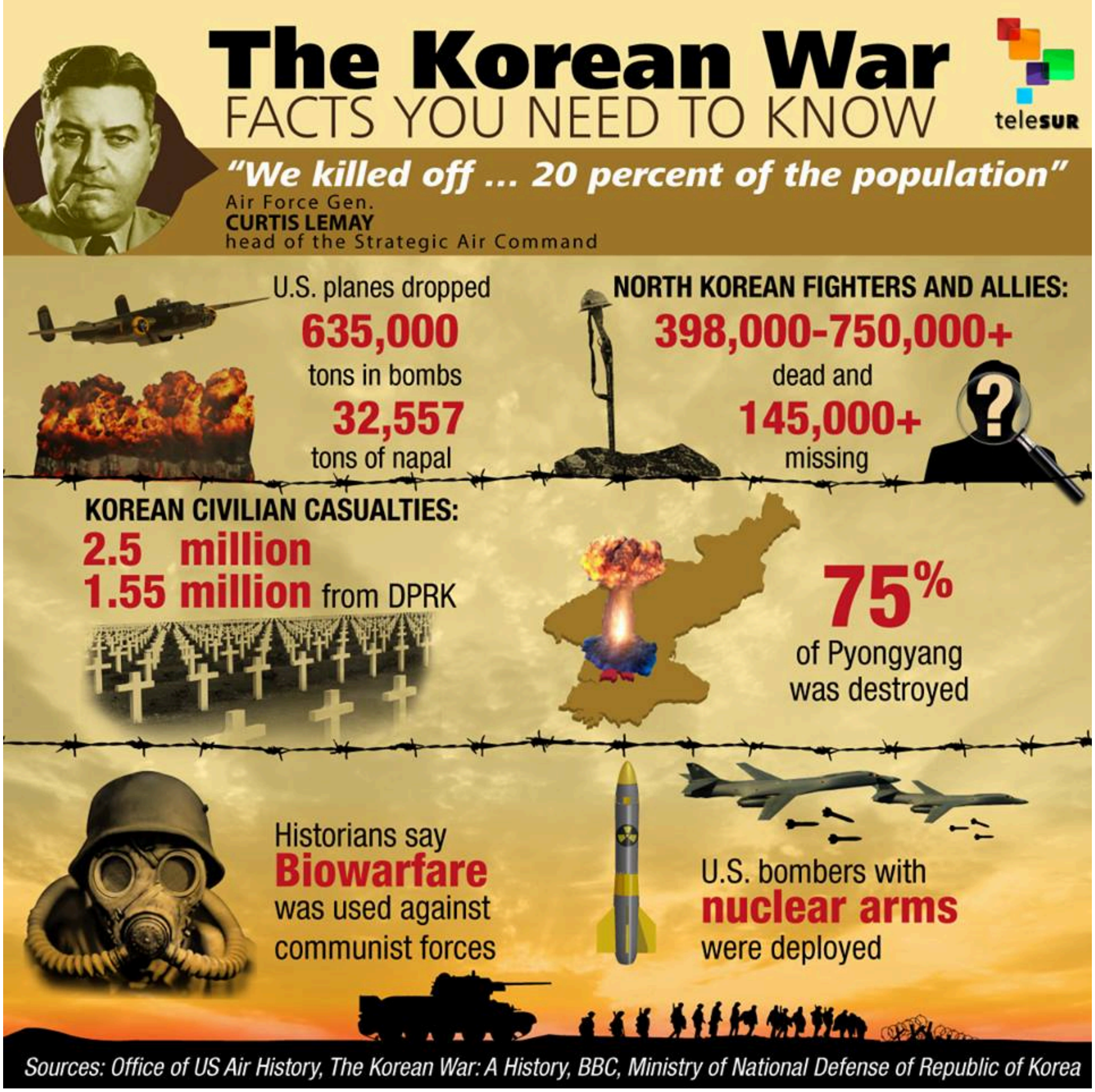
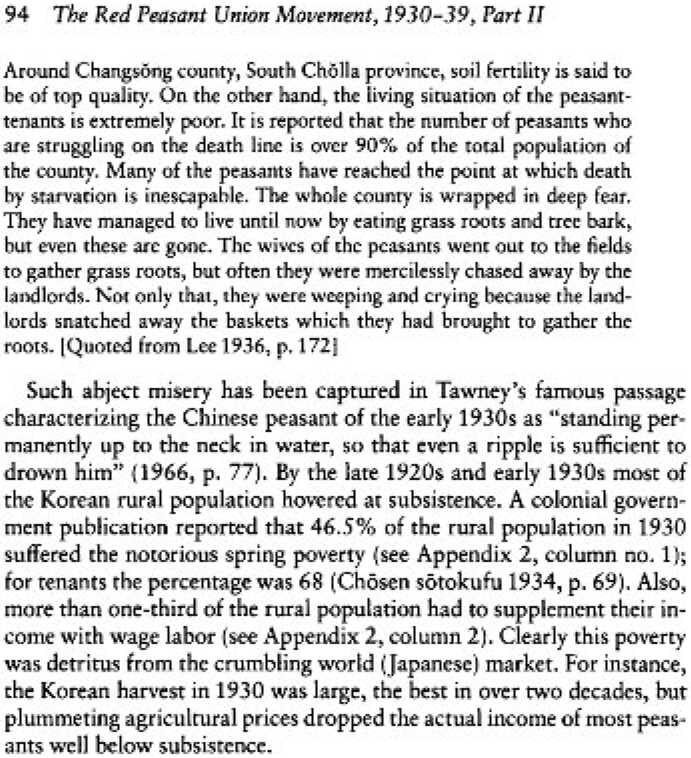
THE KOREAN WAR: AN INTRODUCTION


The Korean War
FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW
teleSUR
"We killed off ... 20 percent of the population"
Air Force Gen.
CURTIS LEMAY
head of the Strategic Air Command
U.S. planes dropped
635,000
tons in bombs
32,557
tons of napal
NORTH KOREAN FIGHTERS AND ALLIES:
398,000-750,000+
dead and
145,000+
missing
KOREAN CIVILIAN CASUALTIES:
2.5 million
1.55 million from DPRK
75%
of Pyongyang
was destroyed
Historians say
Biowarfare
was used against
communist forces
U.S. bombers with
nuclear arms
were deployed

Sources: Office of US Air History, The Korean War: A History, BBC, Ministry of National Defense of Republic of Korea

recommended source: [the ethics of bombing civilians after world war ii: the persistence of norms against targeting civilians in the korean]

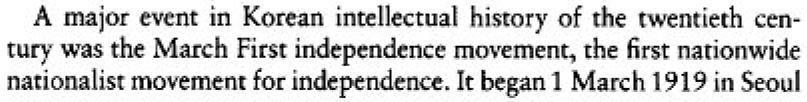
First, a pop quiz. Do you know the name of the last government that had sovereignty over the entire Korean Peninsula? You get one clue: it isn't the Empire of Japan.The answer to that question will come later. For now, let's take a look at the situation in Korea under Japanese occupation, officially the period from 1910 to 1945 — though Japan had meddled in Korean affairs long before annexation. Few Westerners are aware of Korea's history of popular resistance. After 1910, Japan sent in a massive settler population, claiming Korean lands and putting most of the population to work as tenant farmers. The results were predictable — abject poverty and starvation.



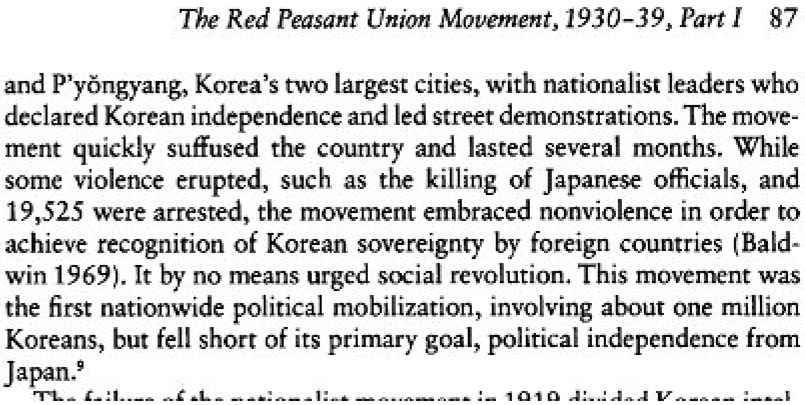
> Around Changsŏng county, South Chŏlla province, soil fertility is said to be of top quality. On the other hand, the living situation of the peasant-tenants is extremely poor. It is reported that the number of peasants who are struggling on the death line is over 90% of the total population of the county. Many of the peasants have reached the point at which death by starvation is inescapable. The whole county is wrapped in deep fear. They have managed to live until now by eating grass roots and tree bark, but even these are gone. The wives of the peasants went out to the fields to gather grass roots, but often they were mercilessly chased away by the landlords. Not only that, they were weeping and crying because the landlords snatched away the baskets which they had brought to gather the roots. [Quoted from Lee 1936, p. 172]

Such abject misery has been captured in Tawney's famous passage characterizing the Chinese peasant of the early 1930s as "standing permanently up to the neck in water, so that even a ripple is sufficient to drown him" (1966, p. 77). By the late 1920s and early 1930s most of the Korean rural population hovered at subsistence. A colonial government publication reported that 46.5% of the rural population in 1930 suffered the notorious spring poverty (see Appendix 2, column no. 1); for tenants the percentage was 68 (Chōsen sōtokufu 1934, p. 69). Also, more than one-third of the rural population had to supplement their income with wage labor (see Appendix 2, column 2). Clearly this poverty was detritus from the crumbling world (Japanese) market. For instance, the Korean harvest in 1930 was large, the best in over two decades, but plummeting agricultural prices dropped the actual income of most peasants well below subsistence.

Japanese share of arable land on the peninsula grew, as did the misery of tenant farmers. Soon, anti-colonial resistance sprouted up, with the first (unsuccessful) nationwide independence movement in 1919.

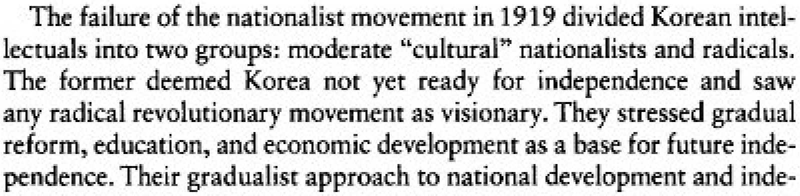


A major event in Korean intellectual history of the twentieth century was the March First independence movement, the first nationwide nationalist movement for independence. It began 1 March 1919 in Seoul

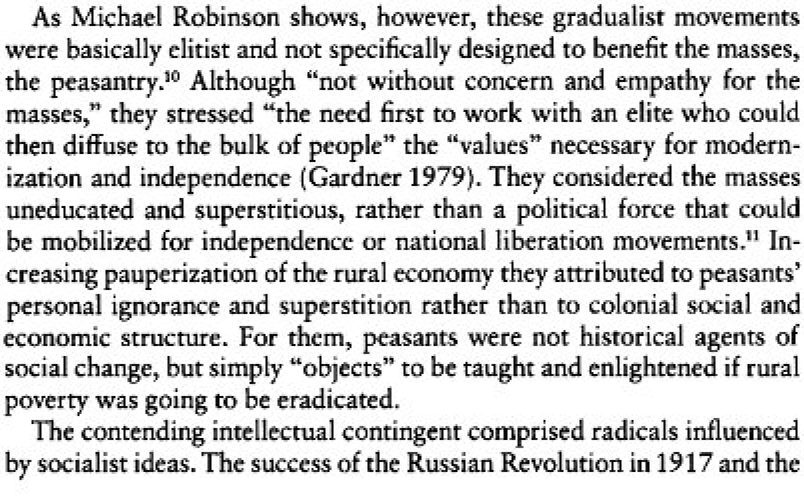


and P'yŏngyang, Korea's two largest cities, with nationalist leaders who declared Korean independence and led street demonstrations. The movement quickly suffused the country and lasted several months. While some violence erupted, such as the killing of Japanese officials, and 19,525 were arrested, the movement embraced nonviolence in order to achieve recognition of Korean sovereignty by foreign countries (Baldwin 1969). It by no means urged social revolution. This movement was the first nationwide political mobilization, involving about one million Koreans, but fell short of its primary goal, political independence from Japan.[9]

The failure of the March 1st movement led to a split in nationalist sentiment, between moderates and radicals. You can probably guess where the moderates' sympathies lied.



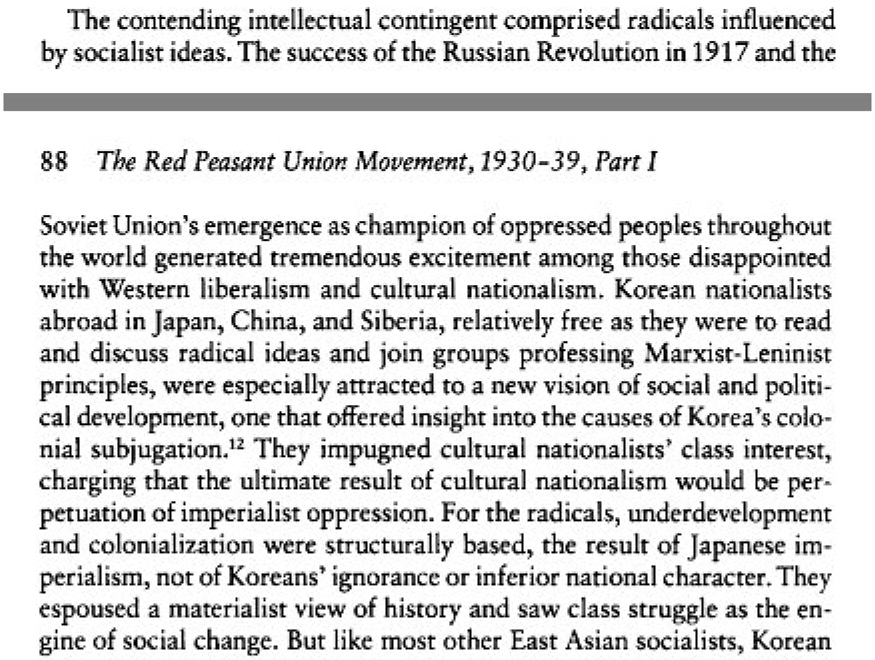
The failure of the nationalist movement in 1919 divided Korean intellectuals into two groups: moderate "cultural" nationalists and radicals. The former deemed Korea not yet ready for independence and saw any radical revolutionary movement as visionary. They stressed gradual reform, education, and economic development as a base for future independence. Their gradualist approach to national development and inde-



As Michael Robinson shows, however, these gradualist movements were basically elitist and not specifically designed to benefit the masses, the peasantry.[10] Although "not without concern and empathy for the masses," they stressed "the need first to work with an elite who could then diffuse to the bulk of people" the "values" necessary for modernization and independence (Gardner 1979). They considered the masses uneducated and superstitious, rather than a political force that could be mobilized for independence or national liberation movements.[11] Increasing pauperization of the rural economy they attributed to peasants' personal ignorance and superstition rather than to colonial social and economic structure. For them, peasants were not historical agents of social change, but simply "objects" to be taught and enlightened if rural poverty was going to be eradicated.

The contending intellectual contingent comprised radicals influenced by socialist ideas. The success of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the

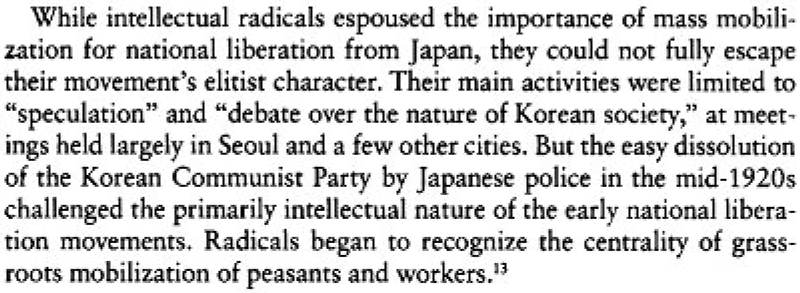
Radicals, on the other hand, were inspired by the recent revolution in Russia, and began seeking out Marxist and Leninist texts for study and discussion. Many did so in exile.



88 *The Red Peasant Union Movement, 1930–39, Part I*

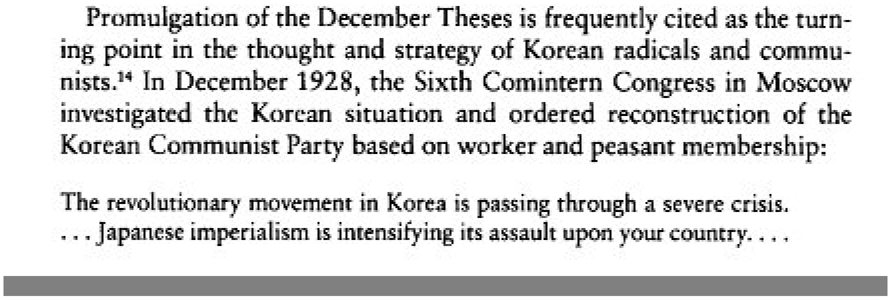
The contending intellectual contingent comprised radicals influenced by socialist ideas. The success of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the Soviet Union's emergence as champion of oppressed peoples throughout the world generated tremendous excitement among those disappointed with Western liberalism and cultural nationalism. Korean nationalists abroad in Japan, China, and Siberia, relatively free as they were to read and discuss radical ideas and join groups professing Marxist-Leninist principles, were especially attracted to a new vision of social and political development, one that offered insight into the causes of Korea's colonial subjugation.[12] They impugned cultural nationalists' class interest, charging that the ultimate result of cultural nationalism would be perpetuation of imperialist oppression. For the radicals, underdevelopment and colonialization were structurally based, the result of Japanese imperialism, not of Koreans' ignorance or inferior national character. They espoused a materialist view of history and saw class struggle as the engine of social change. But like most other East Asian socialists, Korean

But thinking wasn't enough, and the nascent, somewhat elitist communist movement in Korea was snuffed out quickly by Japanese authorities.



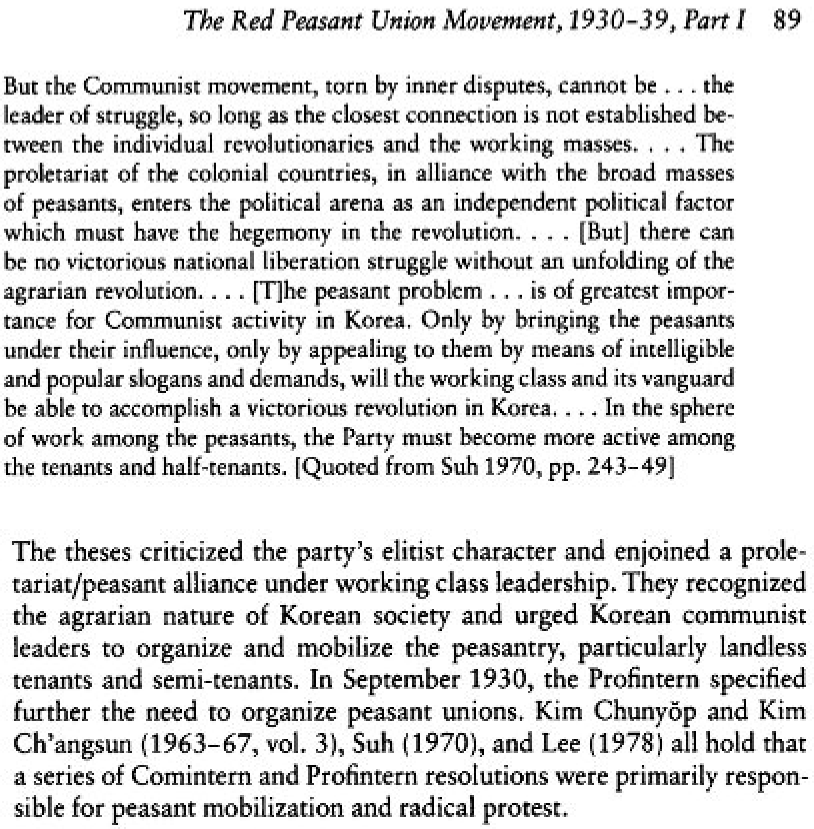
While intellectual radicals espoused the importance of mass mobilization for national liberation from Japan, they could not fully escape their movement's elitist character. Their main activities were limited to "speculation" and "debate over the nature of Korean society," at meetings held largely in Seoul and a few other cities. But the easy dissolution of the Korean Communist Party by Japanese police in the mid-1920s challenged the primarily intellectual nature of the early national liberation movements. Radicals began to recognize the centrality of grass-roots mobilization of peasants and workers.[13]

This setback became opportunity. Korean communists were, some historians claim, put on the right path by the Soviet-led Communist International, whose December Theses criticized the movement for its lack of connection to the workers and peasants.



Promulgation of the December Theses is frequently cited as the turning point in the thought and strategy of Korean radicals and communists.[14] In December 1928, the Sixth Comintern Congress in Moscow investigated the Korean situation and ordered reconstruction of the Korean Communist Party based on worker and peasant membership:

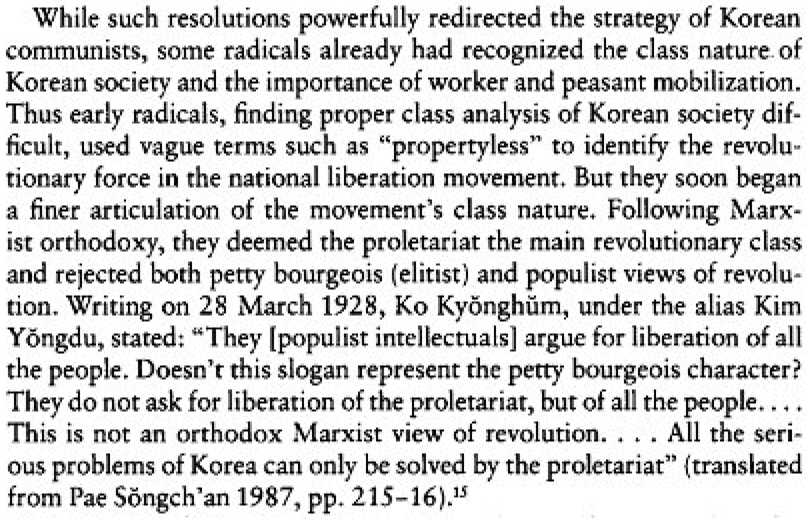
> The revolutionary movement in Korea is passing through a severe crisis. . . . Japanese imperialism is intensifying its assault upon your country. . . .



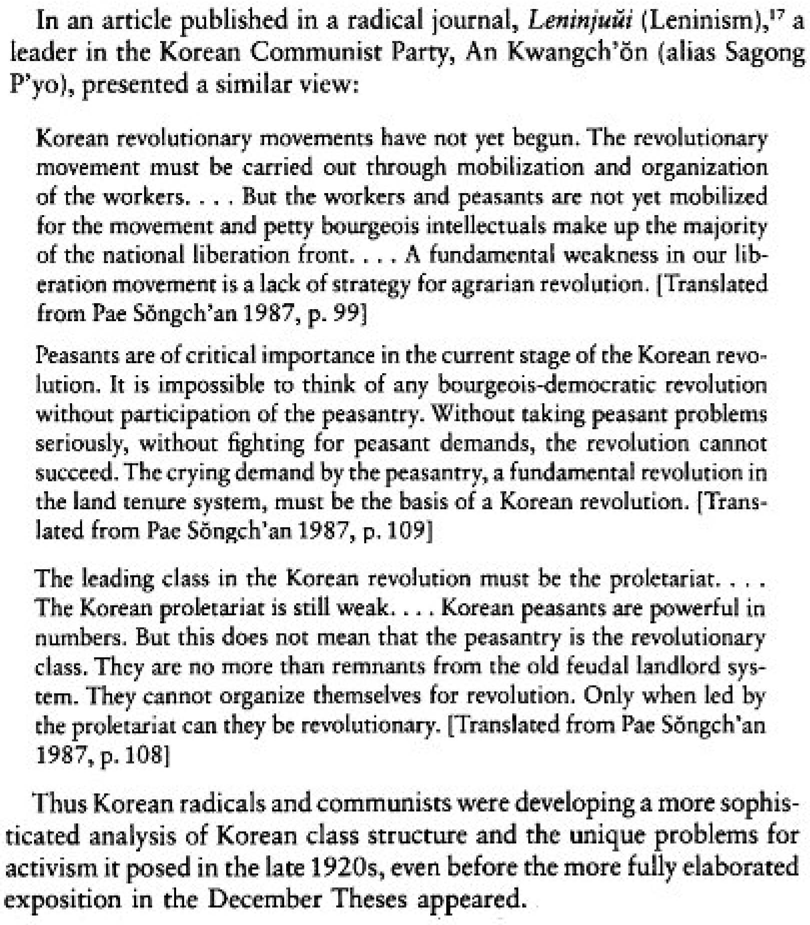
> But the Communist movement, torn by inner disputes, cannot be . . . the leader of struggle, so long as the closest connection is not established between the individual revolutionaries and the working masses. . . . The proletariat of the colonial countries, in alliance with the broad masses of peasants, enters the political arena as an independent political factor which must have the hegemony in the revolution. . . . [But] there can be no victorious national liberation struggle without an unfolding of the agrarian revolution. . . . [T]he peasant problem . . . is of greatest importance for Communist activity in Korea. Only by bringing the peasants under their influence, only by appealing to them by means of intelligible and popular slogans and demands, will the working class and its vanguard be able to accomplish a victorious revolution in Korea. . . . In the sphere of work among the peasants, the Party must become more active among the tenants and half-tenants. [Quoted from Suh 1970, pp. 243–49]

The theses criticized the party's elitist character and enjoined a proletariat/peasant alliance under working class leadership. They recognized the agrarian nature of Korean society and urged Korean communist leaders to organize and mobilize the peasantry, particularly landless tenants and semi-tenants. In September 1930, the Profintern specified further the need to organize peasant unions. Kim Chunyŏp and Kim Ch'angsun (1963–67, vol. 3), Suh (1970), and Lee (1978) all hold that a series of Comintern and Profintern resolutions were primarily responsible for peasant mobilization and radical protest.

It's a mildly racist assumption. Korean theorists had come to the same conclusions well before the Theses were promulgated, though the Soviets certainly helped speed things along.



While such resolutions powerfully redirected the strategy of Korean communists, some radicals already had recognized the class nature of Korean society and the importance of worker and peasant mobilization. Thus early radicals, finding proper class analysis of Korean society difficult, used vague terms such as "propertyless" to identify the revolutionary force in the national liberation movement. But they soon began a finer articulation of the movement's class nature. Following Marxist orthodoxy, they deemed the proletariat the main revolutionary class and rejected both petty bourgeois (elitist) and populist views of revolution. Writing on 28 March 1928, Ko Kyŏnghŭm, under the alias Kim Yŏngdu, stated: "They [populist intellectuals] argue for liberation of all the people. Doesn't this slogan represent the petty bourgeois character? They do not ask for liberation of the proletariat, but of all the people. . . . This is not an orthodox Marxist view of revolution. . . . All the serious problems of Korea can only be solved by the proletariat" (translated from Pae Sŏngch'an 1987, pp. 215–16).[15]

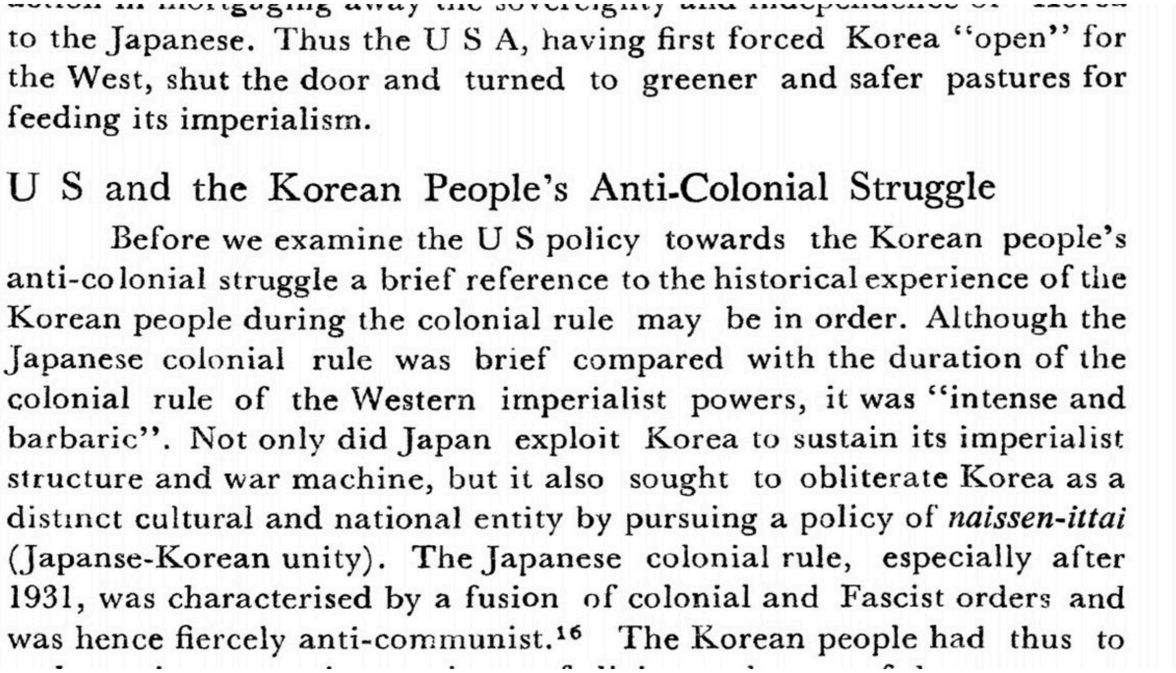


In an article published in a radical journal, *Leninjuŭi* (Leninism),[17] a leader in the Korean Communist Party, An Kwangch'ŏn (alias Sagong P'yo), presented a similar view:

> Korean revolutionary movements have not yet begun. The revolutionary movement must be carried out through mobilization and organization of the workers. . . . But the workers and peasants are not yet mobilized for the movement and petty bourgeois intellectuals make up the majority of the national liberation front. . . . A fundamental weakness in our liberation movement is a lack of strategy for agrarian revolution. [Translated from Pae Sŏngch'an 1987, p. 99]
>
> Peasants are of critical importance in the current stage of the Korean revolution. It is impossible to think of any bourgeois-democratic revolution without participation of the peasantry. Without taking peasant problems seriously, without fighting for peasant demands, the revolution cannot succeed. The crying demand by the peasantry, a fundamental revolution in the land tenure system, must be the basis of a Korean revolution. [Translated from Pae Sŏngch'an 1987, p. 109]
>
> The leading class in the Korean revolution must be the proletariat. . . . The Korean proletariat is still weak. . . . Korean peasants are powerful in numbers. But this does not mean that the peasantry is the revolutionary class. They are no more than remnants from the old feudal landlord system. They cannot organize themselves for revolution. Only when led by the proletariat can they be revolutionary. [Translated from Pae Sŏngch'an 1987, p. 108]

Thus Korean radicals and communists were developing a more sophisticated analysis of Korean class structure and the unique problems for activism it posed in the late 1920s, even before the more fully elaborated exposition in the December Theses appeared.

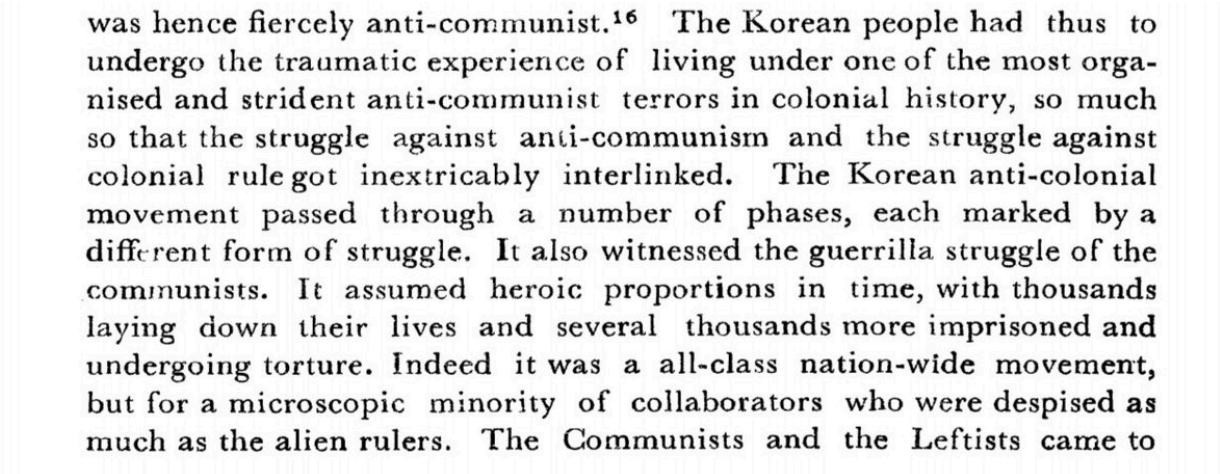
These developments were happening deep within a crucible. After the largely nonviolent 1919 independence actions, exiled activists led desperate peasants and workers in armed struggle.



to the Japanese. Thus the U S A, having first forced Korea "open" for the West, shut the door and turned to greener and safer pastures for feeding its imperialism.

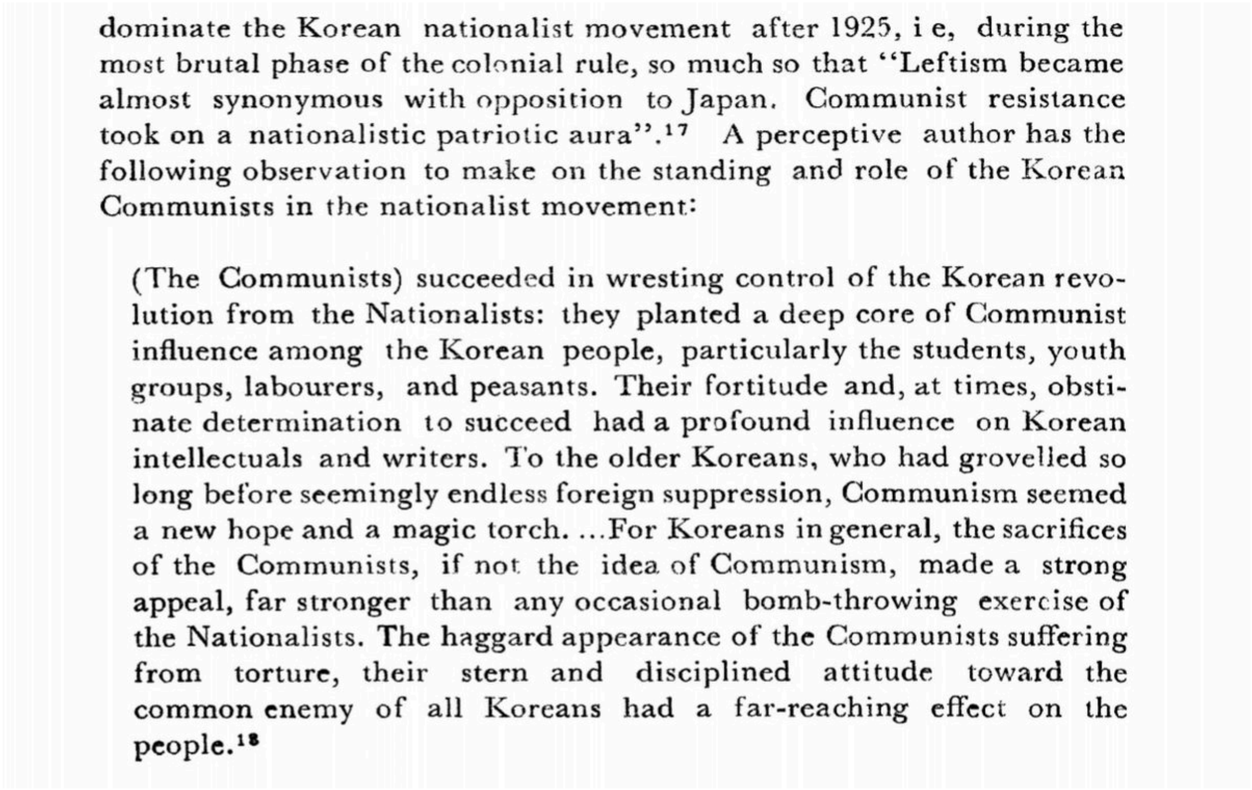
U S and the Korean People's Anti-Colonial Struggle

Before we examine the U S policy towards the Korean people's anti-colonial struggle a brief reference to the historical experience of the Korean people during the colonial rule may be in order. Although the Japanese colonial rule was brief compared with the duration of the colonial rule of the Western imperialist powers, it was "intense and barbaric". Not only did Japan exploit Korea to sustain its imperialist structure and war machine, but it also sought to obliterate Korea as a distinct cultural and national entity by pursuing a policy of ***naissen-ittai*** (Japanse-Korean unity). The Japanese colonial rule, especially after 1931, was characterised by a fusion of colonial and Fascist orders and was hence fiercely anti-communist.[16] The Korean people had thus to



was hence fiercely anti-communist.[16] The Korean people had thus to
undergo the traumatic experience of living under one of the most organised and strident anti-communist terrors in colonial history, so much so that the struggle against anti-communism and the struggle against colonial rule got inextricably interlinked. The Korean anti-colonial movement passed through a number of phases, each marked by a different form of struggle. It also witnessed the guerrilla struggle of the communists. It assumed heroic proportions in time, with thousands laying down their lives and several thousands more imprisoned and undergoing torture. Indeed it was a all-class nation-wide movement, but for a microscopic minority of collaborators who were despised as much as the alien rulers. The Communists and the Leftists came to

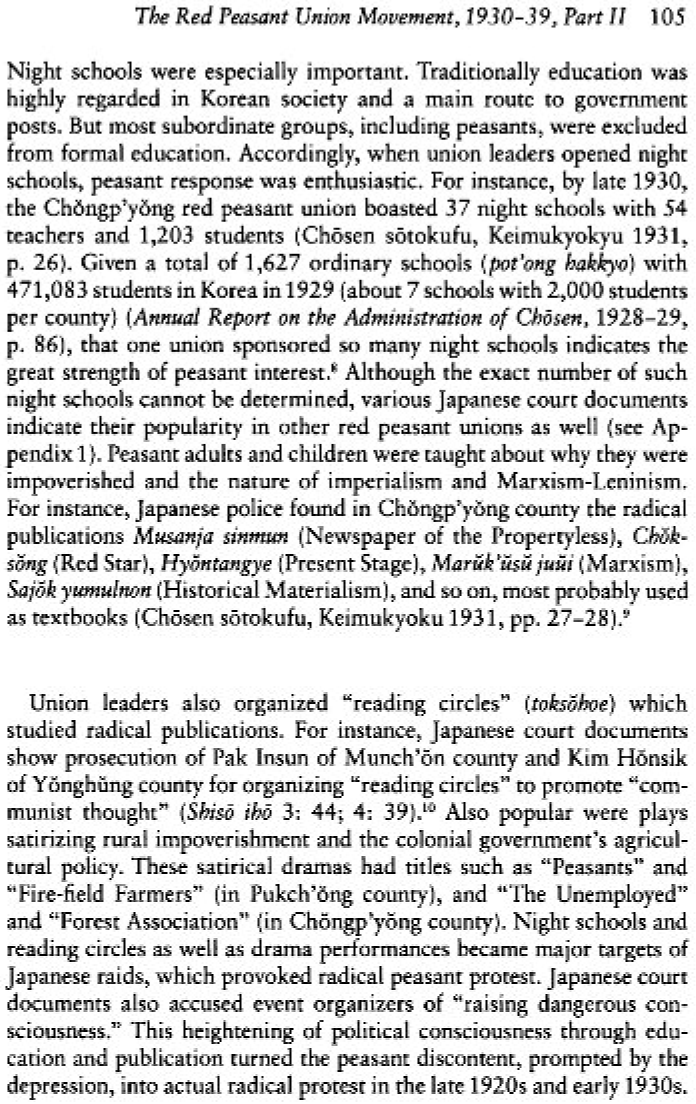
Repressions were harsh, and as communists and leftists were the most disciplined and steadfast opponents to colonial rule, Japanese reprisals began taking on an anti-communist character — but the Korean people began to identify communism with resistance itself.



dominate the Korean nationalist movement after 1925, i e, during the most brutal phase of the colonial rule, so much so that ''Leftism became almost synonymous with opposition to Japan. Communist resistance took on a nationalistic patriotic aura''.[17] A perceptive author has the following observation to make on the standing and role of the Korean Communists in the nationalist movement:

> (The Communists) succeeded in wresting control of the Korean revolution from the Nationalists: they planted a deep core of Communist influence among the Korean people, particularly the students, youth groups, labourers, and peasants. Their fortitude and, at times, obstinate determination to succeed had a profound influence on Korean intellectuals and writers. To the older Koreans, who had grovelled so long before seemingly endless foreign suppression, Communism seemed a new hope and a magic torch. ...For Koreans in general, the sacrifices of the Communists, if not the idea of Communism, made a strong appeal, far stronger than any occasional bomb-throwing exercise of the Nationalists. The haggard appearance of the Communists suffering from torture, their stern and disciplined attitude toward the common enemy of all Koreans had a far-reaching effect on the people.[18]

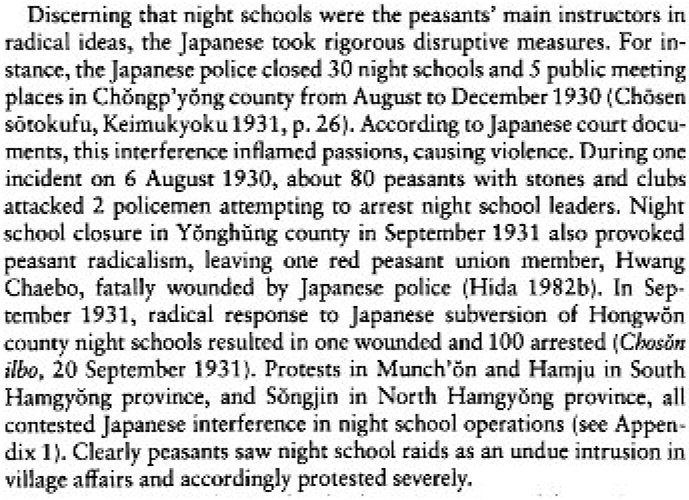
Armed clashes, mostly at the border, were only one aspect of organized resistance to Japanese occupation. A little-remembered peasant union movement took hold, radicalizing rural populations through mutual aid and education.



Night schools were especially important. Traditionally education was highly regarded in Korean society and a main route to government posts. But most subordinate groups, including peasants, were excluded from formal education. Accordingly, when union leaders opened night schools, peasant response was enthusiastic. For instance, by late 1930, the Chŏngp'yŏng red peasant union boasted 37 night schools with 54 teachers and 1,203 students (Chōsen sōtokufu, Keimukyokyu 1931, p. 26). Given a total of 1,627 ordinary schools (*pot'ong hakkyo*) with 471,083 students in Korea in 1929 (about 7 schools with 2,000 students per county) (*Annual Report on the Administration of Chōsen*, 1928–29, p. 86), that one union sponsored so many night schools indicates the great strength of peasant interest.[8] Although the exact number of such night schools cannot be determined, various Japanese court documents indicate their popularity in other red peasant unions as well (see Appendix 1). Peasant adults and children were taught about why they were impoverished and the nature of imperialism and Marxism-Leninism. For instance, Japanese police found in Chŏngp'yŏng county the radical publications *Musanja sinmun* (Newspaper of the Propertyless), *Chŏksŏng* (Red Star), *Hyŏntangye* (Present Stage), *Marŭk'ŭsŭ juŭi* (Marxism), *Sajŏk yumulnon* (Historical Materialism), and so on, most probably used as textbooks (Chōsen sōtokufu, Keimukyoku 1931, pp. 27–28).[9]

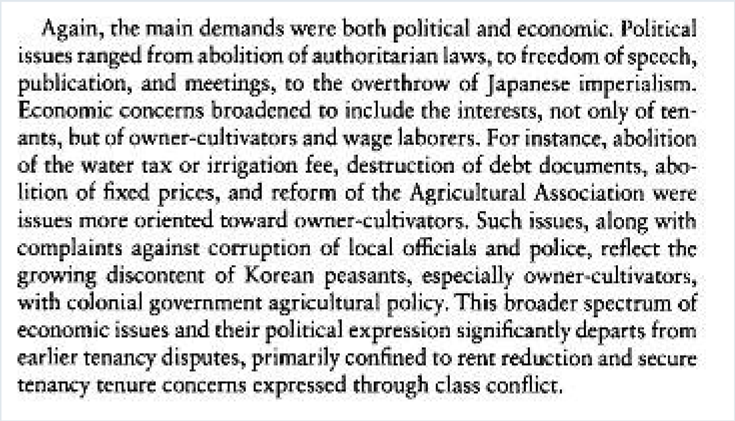
Union leaders also organized "reading circles" (*toksŏhoe*) which studied radical publications. For instance, Japanese court documents show prosecution of Pak Insun of Munch'ŏn county and Kim Hŏnsik of Yŏnghŭng county for organizing "reading circles" to promote "communist thought" (*Shisō ihō* 3: 44; 4: 39).[10] Also popular were plays satirizing rural impoverishment and the colonial government's agricultural policy. These satirical dramas had titles such as "Peasants" and "Fire-field Farmers" (in Pukch'ŏng county), and "The Unemployed" and "Forest Association" (in Chŏngp'yŏng county). Night schools and reading circles as well as drama performances became major targets of Japanese raids, which provoked radical peasant protest. Japanese court documents also accused event organizers of "raising dangerous consciousness." This heightening of political consciousness through education and publication turned the peasant discontent, prompted by the depression, into actual radical protest in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

(Side note: After reading about red peasant unions in Korea, who studied Marxism-Leninism under the yoke of fascists and brutal landlords, I don't want to hear any more bullshit about how workers don't want to read.) Japanese occupiers didn't care for that, and reacted accordingly. They raided night schools and arrested leaders and union members, and red unions protested in return.

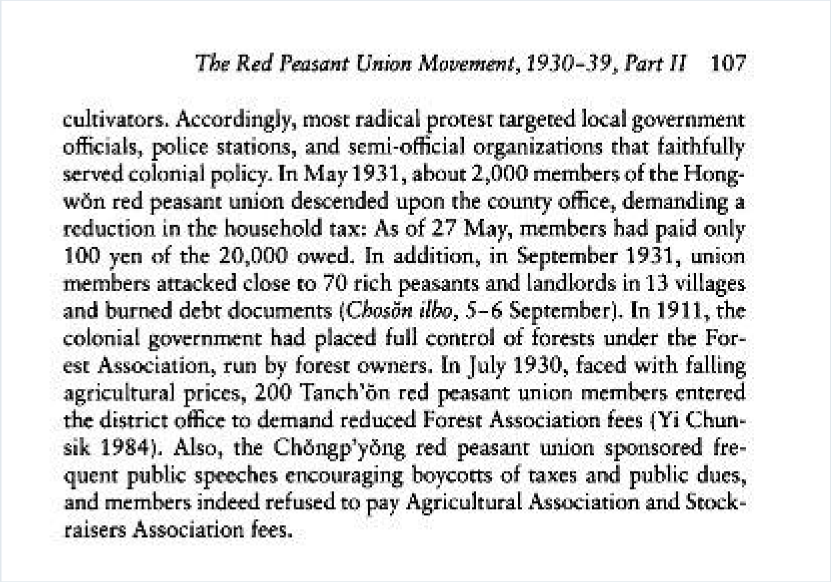


Discerning that night schools were the peasants' main instructors in radical ideas, the Japanese took rigorous disruptive measures. For instance, the Japanese police closed 30 night schools and 5 public meeting places in Chŏngp'yŏng county from August to December 1930 (Chōsen sōtokufu, Keimukyoku 1931, p. 26). According to Japanese court documents, this interference inflamed passions, causing violence. During one incident on 6 August 1930, about 80 peasants with stones and clubs attacked 2 policemen attempting to arrest night school leaders. Night school closure in Yŏnghŭng county in September 1931 also provoked peasant radicalism, leaving one red peasant union member, Hwang Chaebo, fatally wounded by Japanese police (Hida 1982b). In September 1931, radical response to Japanese subversion of Hongwŏn county night schools resulted in one wounded and 100 arrested (*Chosŏn ilbo*, 20 September 1931). Protests in Munch'ŏn and Hamju in South Hamgyŏng province, and Sŏngjin in North Hamgyŏng province, all contested Japanese interference in night school operations (see Appendix 1). Clearly peasants saw night school raids as an undue intrusion in village affairs and accordingly protested severely.

The unions' grievances broadened into a wide-ranging program of radical action.



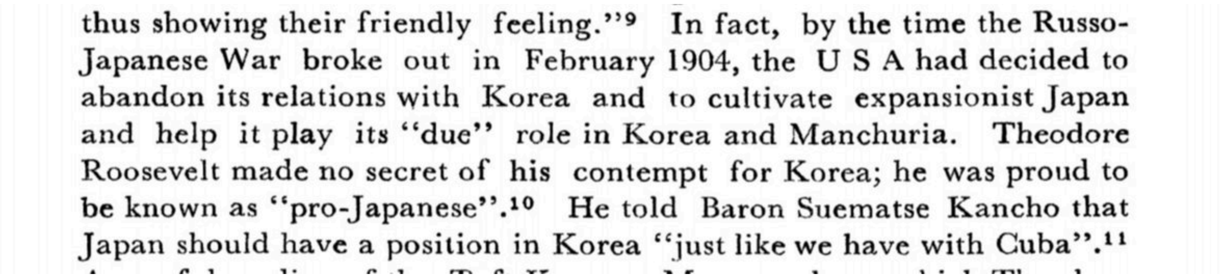
Again, the main demands were both political and economic. Political issues ranged from abolition of authoritarian laws, to freedom of speech, publication, and meetings, to the overthrow of Japanese imperialism. Economic concerns broadened to include the interests, not only of tenants, but of owner-cultivators and wage laborers. For instance, abolition of the water tax or irrigation fee, destruction of debt documents, abolition of fixed prices, and reform of the Agricultural Association were issues more oriented toward owner-cultivators. Such issues, along with complaints against corruption of local officials and police, reflect the growing discontent of Korean peasants, especially owner-cultivators, with colonial government agricultural policy. This broader spectrum of economic issues and their political expression significantly departs from earlier tenancy disputes, primarily confined to rent reduction and secure tenancy tenure concerns expressed through class conflict.



The Red Peasant Union Movement, 1930–39, Part II 107

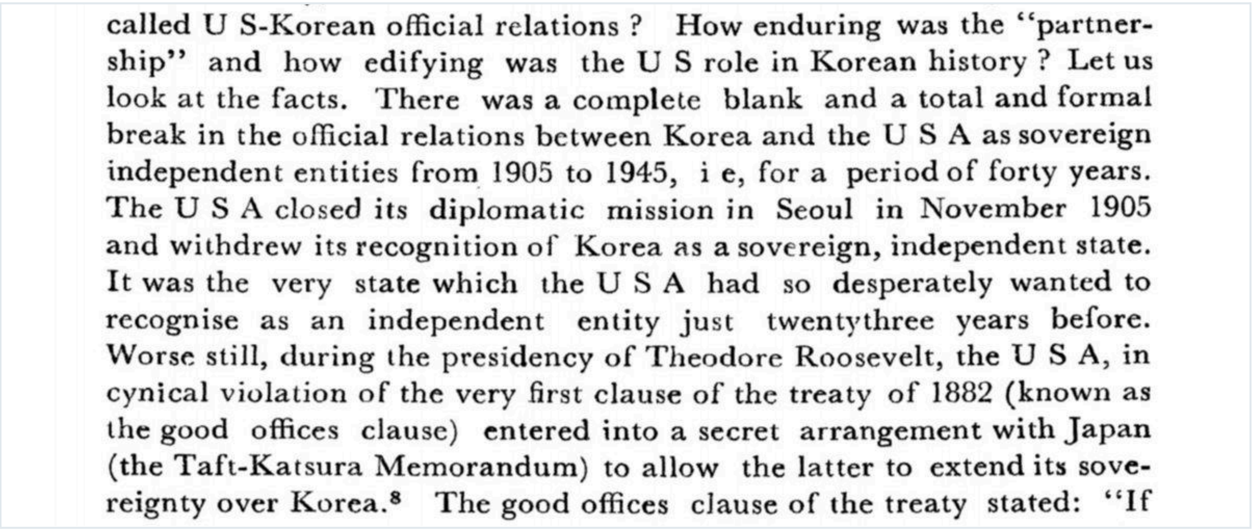
cultivators. Accordingly, most radical protest targeted local government officials, police stations, and semi-official organizations that faithfully served colonial policy. In May 1931, about 2,000 members of the Hongwŏn red peasant union descended upon the county office, demanding a reduction in the household tax: As of 27 May, members had paid only 100 yen of the 20,000 owed. In addition, in September 1931, union members attacked close to 70 rich peasants and landlords in 13 villages and burned debt documents (*Chosŏn ilbo*, 5–6 September). In 1911, the colonial government had placed full control of forests under the Forest Association, run by forest owners. In July 1930, faced with falling agricultural prices, 200 Tanch'ŏn red peasant union members entered the district office to demand reduced Forest Association fees (Yi Chunsik 1984). Also, the Chŏngp'yŏng red peasant union sponsored frequent public speeches encouraging boycotts of taxes and public dues, and members indeed refused to pay Agricultural Association and Stockraisers Association fees.

These myriad forms of resistance laid the groundwork for what would come after Japanese defeat in World War II. But, you might wonder — where is the US in all this?

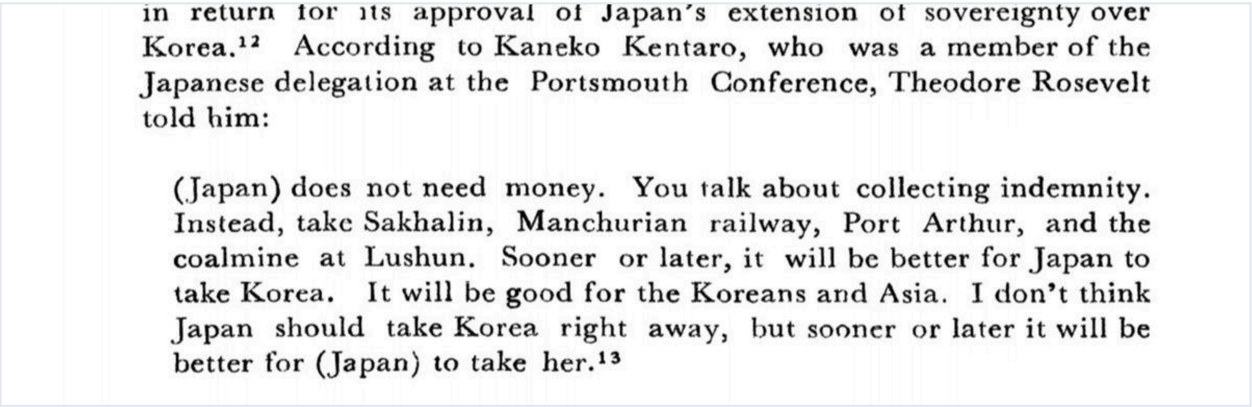


thus showing their friendly feeling.''[9] In fact, by the time the Russo-Japanese War broke out in February 1904, the U S A had decided to abandon its relations with Korea and to cultivate expansionist Japan and help it play its ''due'' role in Korea and Manchuria. Theodore Roosevelt made no secret of his contempt for Korea; he was proud to be known as ''pro-Japanese''.[10] He told Baron Suematse Kancho that Japan should have a position in Korea ''just like we have with Cuba''.[11]

I could just say "doing nothing," but that would only be half-true. They did nothing when it came to Korean independence. When it came to Japanese occupation, they were all for it!



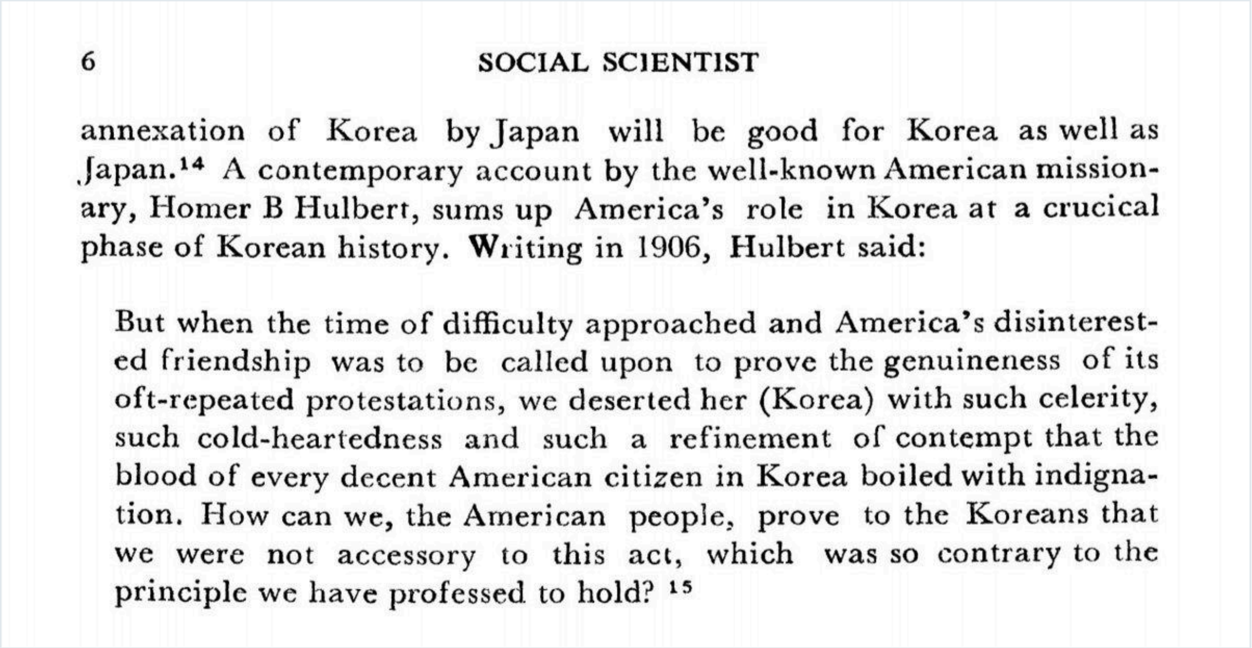
called U S-Korean official relations ? How enduring was the ''partnership'' and how edifying was the U S role in Korean history ? Let us look at the facts. There was a complete blank and a total and formal break in the official relations between Korea and the U S A as sovereign independent entities from 1905 to 1945, i e, for a period of forty years. The U S A closed its diplomatic mission in Seoul in November 1905 and withdrew its recognition of Korea as a sovereign, independent state. It was the very state which the U S A had so desperately wanted to recognise as an independent entity just twentythree years before. Worse still, during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, the U S A, in cynical violation of the very first clause of the treaty of 1882 (known as the good offices clause) entered into a secret arrangement with Japan (the Taft-Katsura Memorandum) to allow the latter to extend its sovereignty over Korea.[8] The good offices clause of the treaty stated: ''If



in return for its approval of Japan's extension of sovereignty over Korea.[12] According to Kaneko Kentaro, who was a member of the Japanese delegation at the Portsmouth Conference, Theodore Rosevelt told him:

> (Japan) does not need money. You talk about collecting indemnity. Instead, take Sakhalin, Manchurian railway, Port Arthur, and the coalmine at Lushun. Sooner or later, it will be better for Japan to take Korea. It will be good for the Koreans and Asia. I don't think Japan should take Korea right away, but sooner or later it will be better for (Japan) to take her.[13]

And it’s not like people didn’t know what was going on in Korea. Plenty commentated on the US’ inaction.



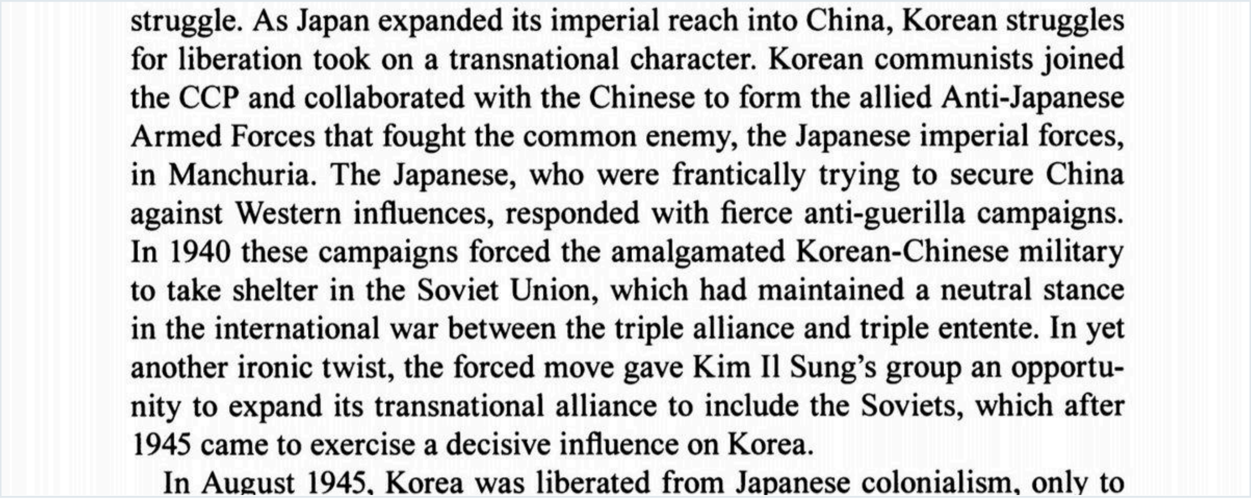
6 SOCIAL SCIENTIST

annexation of Korea by Japan will be good for Korea as well as Japan.[14] A contemporary account by the well-known American missionary, Homer B Hulbert, sums up America’s role in Korea at a crucical phase of Korean history. Writing in 1906, Hulbert said:

> But when the time of difficulty approached and America’s disinterested friendship was to be called upon to prove the genuineness of its oft-repeated protestations, we deserted her (Korea) with such celerity, such cold-heartedness and such a refinement of contempt that the blood of every decent American citizen in Korea boiled with indignation. How can we, the American people, prove to the Koreans that we were not accessory to this act, which was so contrary to the principle we have professed to hold? [15]

Korean independence fighters obviously weren’t getting any help from the US. And the Korean Communist Party wasn’t even in the Comintern anymore. The situation was difficult. Fighting continued. Groups of communist and leftist insurgents distinguished themselves on the field, including a young leader you might recognize.

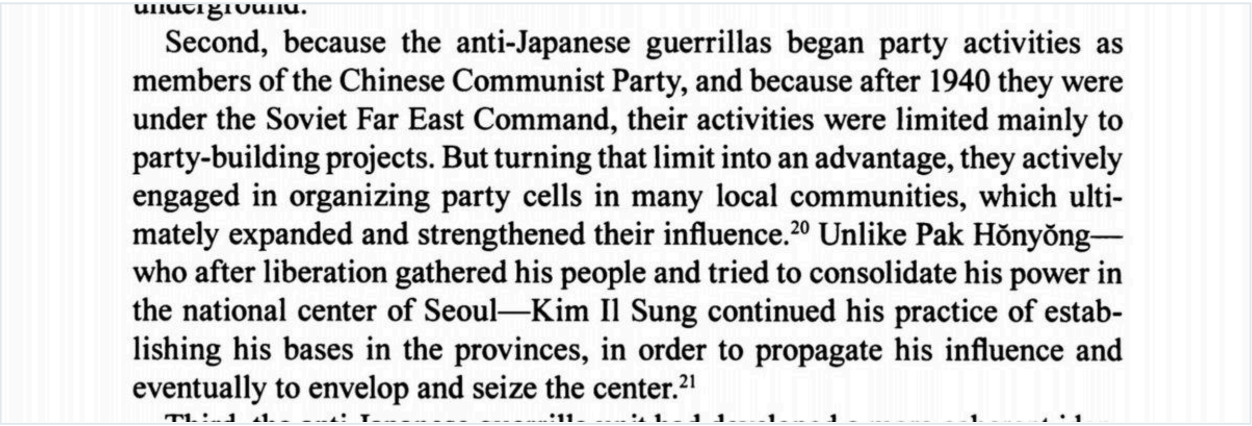
Japan brought China into the war, and Korean fighters joined the Communist Party of China in struggle with the invaders. This eventually included the Soviet Union. Suddenly, the battle for a free Korea had gone international.



struggle. As Japan expanded its imperial reach into China, Korean struggles for liberation took on a transnational character. Korean communists joined the CCP and collaborated with the Chinese to form the allied Anti-Japanese Armed Forces that fought the common enemy, the Japanese imperial forces, in Manchuria. The Japanese, who were frantically trying to secure China against Western influences, responded with fierce anti-guerilla campaigns. In 1940 these campaigns forced the amalgamated Korean-Chinese military to take shelter in the Soviet Union, which had maintained a neutral stance in the international war between the triple alliance and triple entente. In yet another ironic twist, the forced move gave Kim Il Sung's group an opportunity to expand its transnational alliance to include the Soviets, which after 1945 came to exercise a decisive influence on Korea.

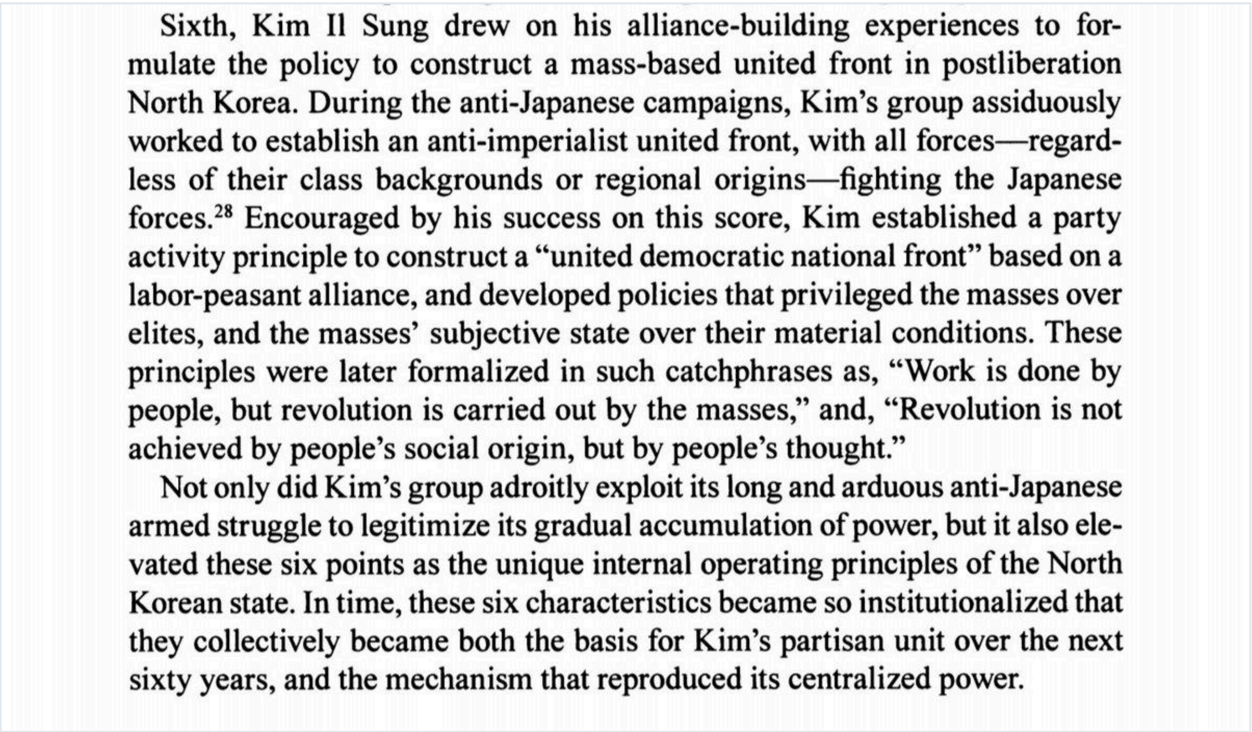
In August 1945, Korea was liberated from Japanese colonialism, only to

Though the Korean communists were far away from their homeland, their position offered several advantages which would come in handy after the war.



underground.

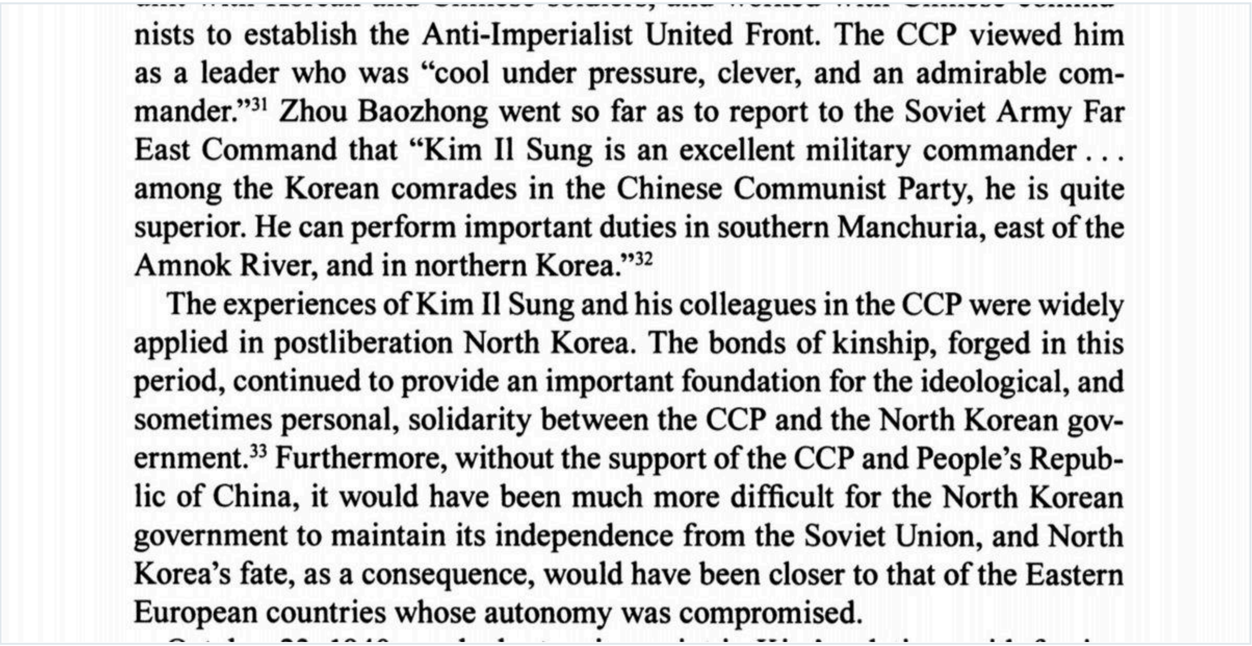
Second, because the anti-Japanese guerrillas began party activities as members of the Chinese Communist Party, and because after 1940 they were under the Soviet Far East Command, their activities were limited mainly to party-building projects. But turning that limit into an advantage, they actively engaged in organizing party cells in many local communities, which ultimately expanded and strengthened their influence.[20] Unlike Pak Hŏnyŏng—who after liberation gathered his people and tried to consolidate his power in the national center of Seoul—Kim Il Sung continued his practice of establishing his bases in the provinces, in order to propagate his influence and eventually to envelop and seize the center.[21]



Sixth, Kim Il Sung drew on his alliance-building experiences to formulate the policy to construct a mass-based united front in postliberation North Korea. During the anti-Japanese campaigns, Kim's group assiduously worked to establish an anti-imperialist united front, with all forces—regardless of their class backgrounds or regional origins—fighting the Japanese forces.[28] Encouraged by his success on this score, Kim established a party activity principle to construct a "united democratic national front" based on a labor-peasant alliance, and developed policies that privileged the masses over elites, and the masses' subjective state over their material conditions. These principles were later formalized in such catchphrases as, "Work is done by people, but revolution is carried out by the masses," and, "Revolution is not achieved by people's social origin, but by people's thought."

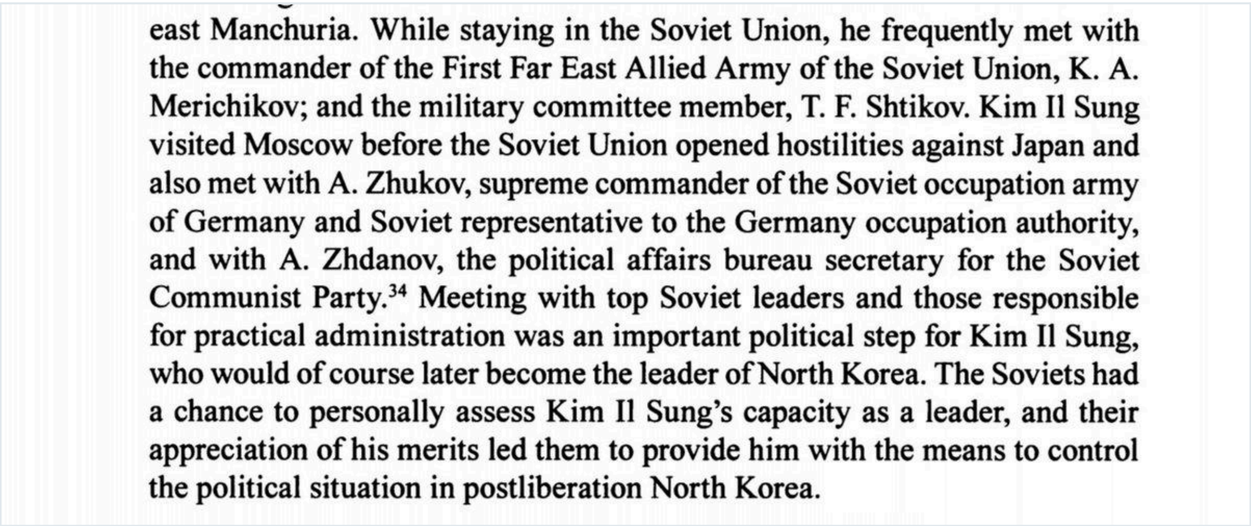
Not only did Kim's group adroitly exploit its long and arduous anti-Japanese armed struggle to legitimize its gradual accumulation of power, but it also elevated these six points as the unique internal operating principles of the North Korean state. In time, these six characteristics became so institutionalized that they collectively became both the basis for Kim's partisan unit over the next sixty years, and the mechanism that reproduced its centralized power.

Kim himself impressed foreign commanders, both Chinese and Soviet. This no doubt aided him in his rise to leadership.



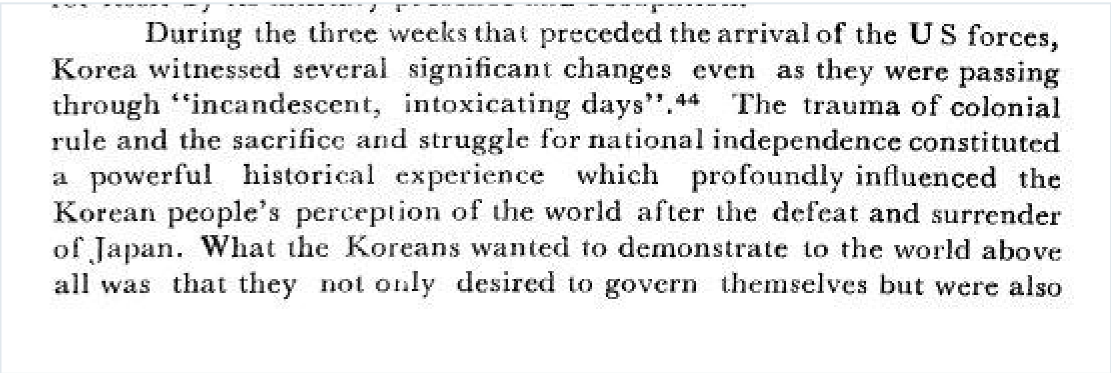
nists to establish the Anti-Imperialist United Front. The CCP viewed him as a leader who was "cool under pressure, clever, and an admirable commander."[31] Zhou Baozhong went so far as to report to the Soviet Army Far East Command that "Kim Il Sung is an excellent military commander . . . among the Korean comrades in the Chinese Communist Party, he is quite superior. He can perform important duties in southern Manchuria, east of the Amnok River, and in northern Korea."[32]

The experiences of Kim Il Sung and his colleagues in the CCP were widely applied in postliberation North Korea. The bonds of kinship, forged in this period, continued to provide an important foundation for the ideological, and sometimes personal, solidarity between the CCP and the North Korean government.[33] Furthermore, without the support of the CCP and People's Republic of China, it would have been much more difficult for the North Korean government to maintain its independence from the Soviet Union, and North Korea's fate, as a consequence, would have been closer to that of the Eastern European countries whose autonomy was compromised.

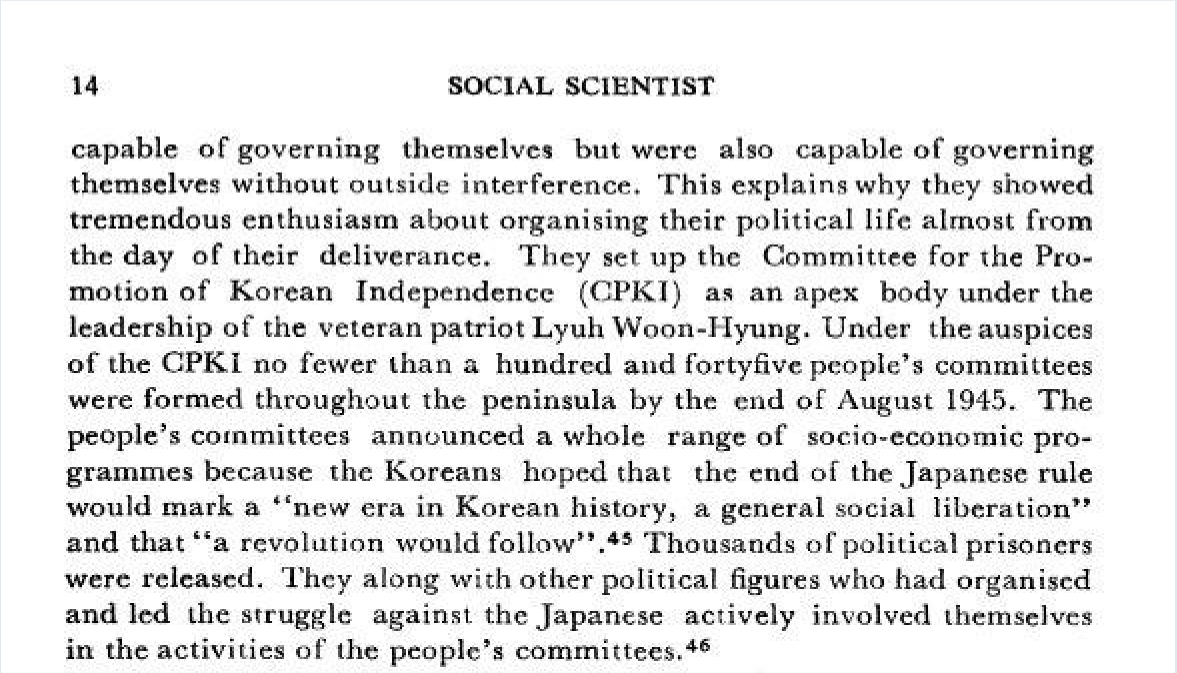


east Manchuria. While staying in the Soviet Union, he frequently met with the commander of the First Far East Allied Army of the Soviet Union, K. A. Merichikov; and the military committee member, T. F. Shtikov. Kim Il Sung visited Moscow before the Soviet Union opened hostilities against Japan and also met with A. Zhukov, supreme commander of the Soviet occupation army of Germany and Soviet representative to the Germany occupation authority, and with A. Zhdanov, the political affairs bureau secretary for the Soviet Communist Party.[34] Meeting with top Soviet leaders and those responsible for practical administration was an important political step for Kim Il Sung, who would of course later become the leader of North Korea. The Soviets had a chance to personally assess Kim Il Sung's capacity as a leader, and their appreciation of his merits led them to provide him with the means to control the political situation in postliberation North Korea.

I'm skipping World War II now. Sorry. Skip forward and the Red Army enters Korea. The Soviets have accepted the American proposal to divide the peninsula at the 38th parallel. More on that later. In the weeks between the Soviet landing in mid-August and the American arrival in early September, something incredible happens. This is maybe the most overlooked moment in modern Korean history. Immediately after Japanese surrender, Koreans get to work on their own system of government. At last, a people who have suffered endlessly under imperialism can build a country of their own, and they do so. Establishing what soon came to be known as "people's committees," Koreans begin developing a unified system — completely spontaneously.



During the three weeks that preceded the arrival of the U S forces, Korea witnessed several significant changes even as they were passing through ‘‘incandescent, intoxicating days’’.[44] The trauma of colonial rule and the sacrifice and struggle for national independence constituted a powerful historical experience which profoundly influenced the Korean people's perception of the world after the defeat and surrender of Japan. What the Koreans wanted to demonstrate to the world above all was that they not only desired to govern themselves but were also



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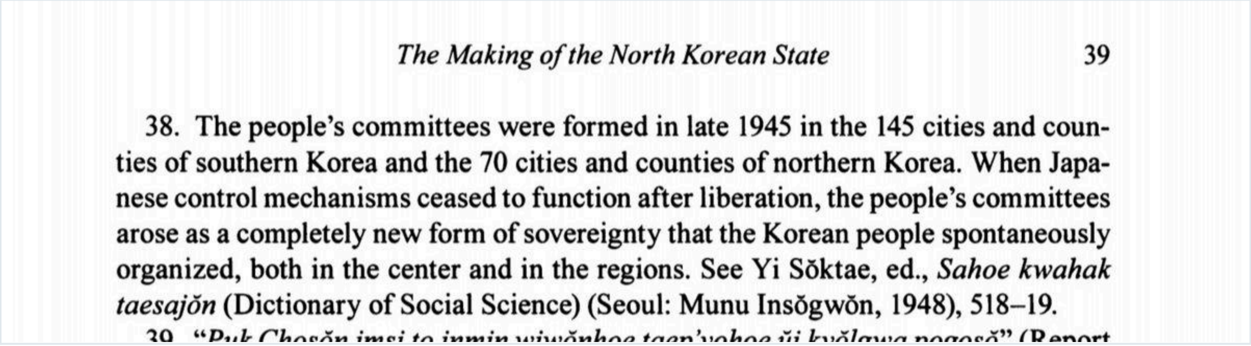
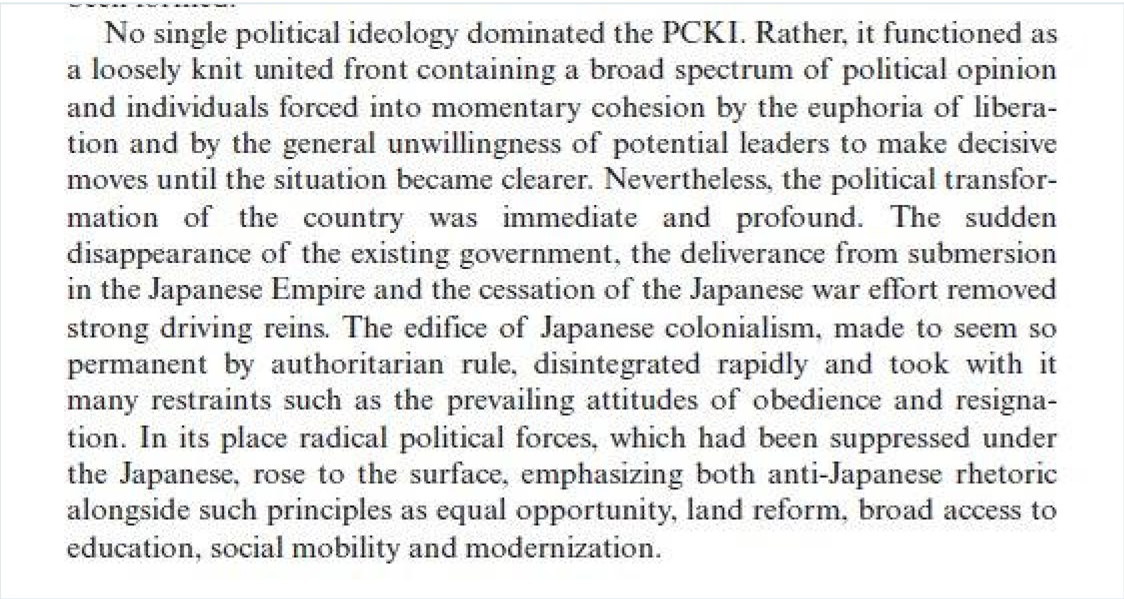
capable of governing themselves but were also capable of governing themselves without outside interference. This explains why they showed tremendous enthusiasm about organising their political life almost from the day of their deliverance. They set up the Committee for the Promotion of Korean Independence (CPKI) as an apex body under the leadership of the veteran patriot Lyuh Woon-Hyung. Under the auspices of the CPKI no fewer than a hundred and fortyfive people's committees were formed throughout the peninsula by the end of August 1945. The people's committees announced a whole range of socio-economic programmes because the Koreans hoped that the end of the Japanese rule would mark a "new era in Korean history, a general social liberation" and that "a revolution would follow".[45] Thousands of political prisoners were released. They along with other political figures who had organised and led the struggle against the Japanese actively involved themselves in the activities of the people's committees.[46]



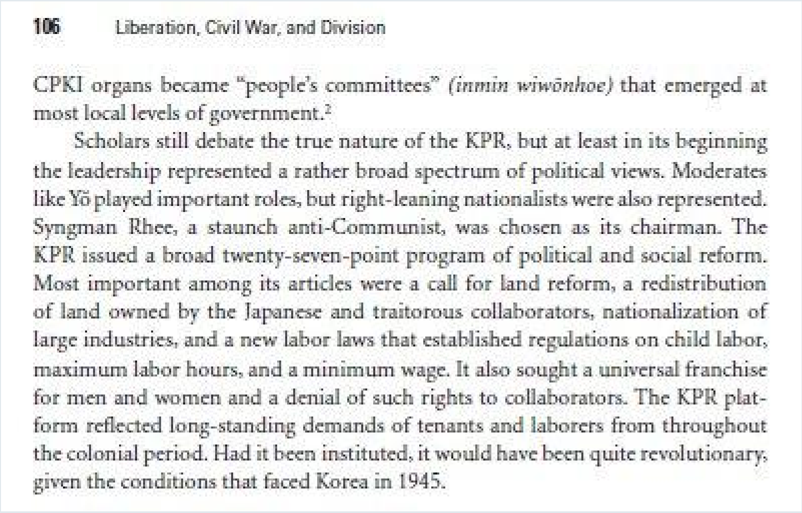
The Making of the North Korean State 39

38. The people's committees were formed in late 1945 in the 145 cities and counties of southern Korea and the 70 cities and counties of northern Korea. When Japanese control mechanisms ceased to function after liberation, the people's committees arose as a completely new form of sovereignty that the Korean people spontaneously organized, both in the center and in the regions. See Yi Sŏktae, ed., *Sahoe kwahak taesajŏn* (Dictionary of Social Science) (Seoul: Munu Insŏgwŏn, 1948), 518–19.

Despite the name, the people's committees weren't strictly communist organs. A wide variety of groups participated during this period.



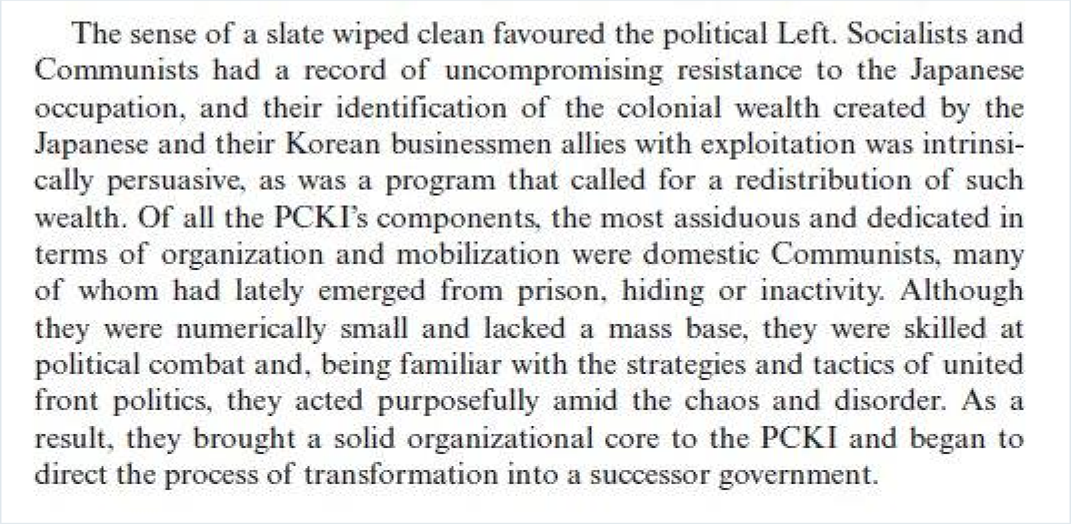
No single political ideology dominated the PCKI. Rather, it functioned as a loosely knit united front containing a broad spectrum of political opinion and individuals forced into momentary cohesion by the euphoria of liberation and by the general unwillingness of potential leaders to make decisive moves until the situation became clearer. Nevertheless, the political transformation of the country was immediate and profound. The sudden disappearance of the existing government, the deliverance from submersion in the Japanese Empire and the cessation of the Japanese war effort removed strong driving reins. The edifice of Japanese colonialism, made to seem so permanent by authoritarian rule, disintegrated rapidly and took with it many restraints such as the prevailing attitudes of obedience and resignation. In its place radical political forces, which had been suppressed under the Japanese, rose to the surface, emphasizing both anti-Japanese rhetoric alongside such principles as equal opportunity, land reform, broad access to education, social mobility and modernization.



CPKI organs became "people's committees" *(inmin wiwŏnhoe)* that emerged at most local levels of government.[2]

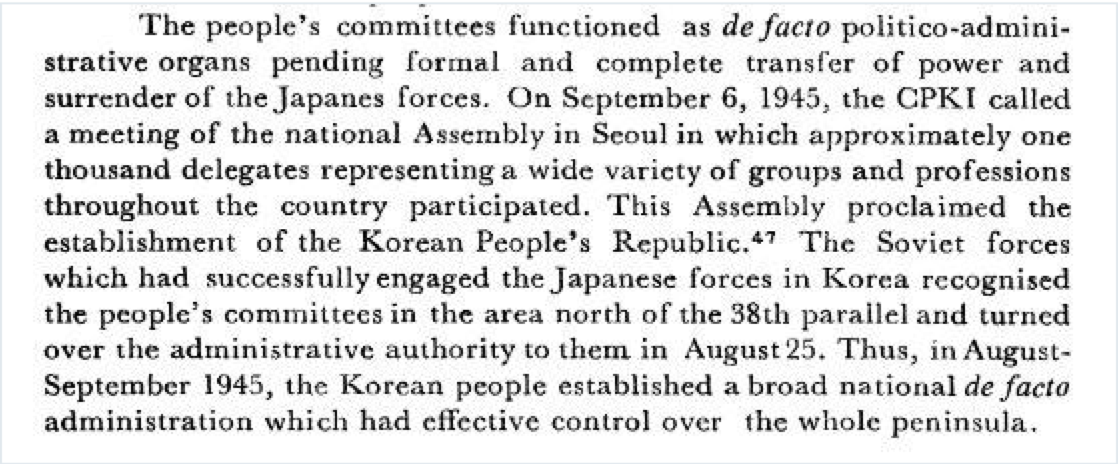
Scholars still debate the true nature of the KPR, but at least in its beginning the leadership represented a rather broad spectrum of political views. Moderates like Yŏ played important roles, but right-leaning nationalists were also represented. Syngman Rhee, a staunch anti-Communist, was chosen as its chairman. The KPR issued a broad twenty-seven-point program of political and social reform. Most important among its articles were a call for land reform, a redistribution of land owned by the Japanese and traitorous collaborators, nationalization of large industries, and a new labor laws that established regulations on child labor, maximum labor hours, and a minimum wage. It also sought a universal franchise for men and women and a denial of such rights to collaborators. The KPR platform reflected long-standing demands of tenants and laborers from throughout the colonial period. Had it been instituted, it would have been quite revolutionary, given the conditions that faced Korea in 1945.

The nature of the proposed system did, however, have greater appeal for Korean communists. Through their organizational experience and credibility following the anti-Japanese struggle, they began to mold and shape the committees to favor radical changes.



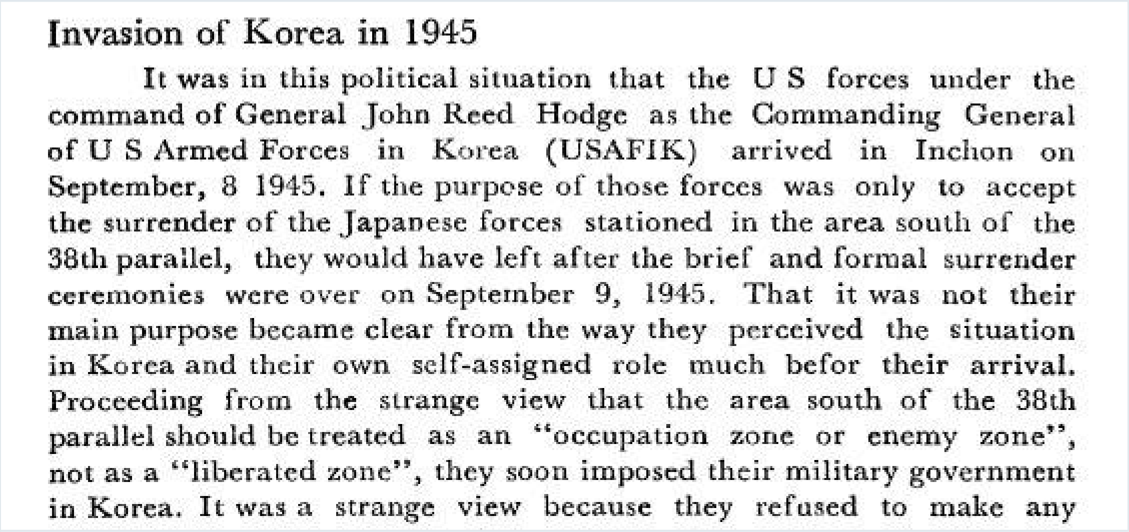
The sense of a slate wiped clean favoured the political Left. Socialists and Communists had a record of uncompromising resistance to the Japanese occupation, and their identification of the colonial wealth created by the Japanese and their Korean businessmen allies with exploitation was intrinsically persuasive, as was a program that called for a redistribution of such wealth. Of all the PCKI's components, the most assiduous and dedicated in terms of organization and mobilization were domestic Communists, many of whom had lately emerged from prison, hiding or inactivity. Although they were numerically small and lacked a mass base, they were skilled at political combat and, being familiar with the strategies and tactics of united front politics, they acted purposefully amid the chaos and disorder. As a result, they brought a solid organizational core to the PCKI and began to direct the process of transformation into a successor government.

This disparate structure eventually coalesced into a de facto government for the whole peninsula, and the answer to that pop quiz I asked at the top of this: the People's Republic of Korea. (Thanks for reading, by the way!)



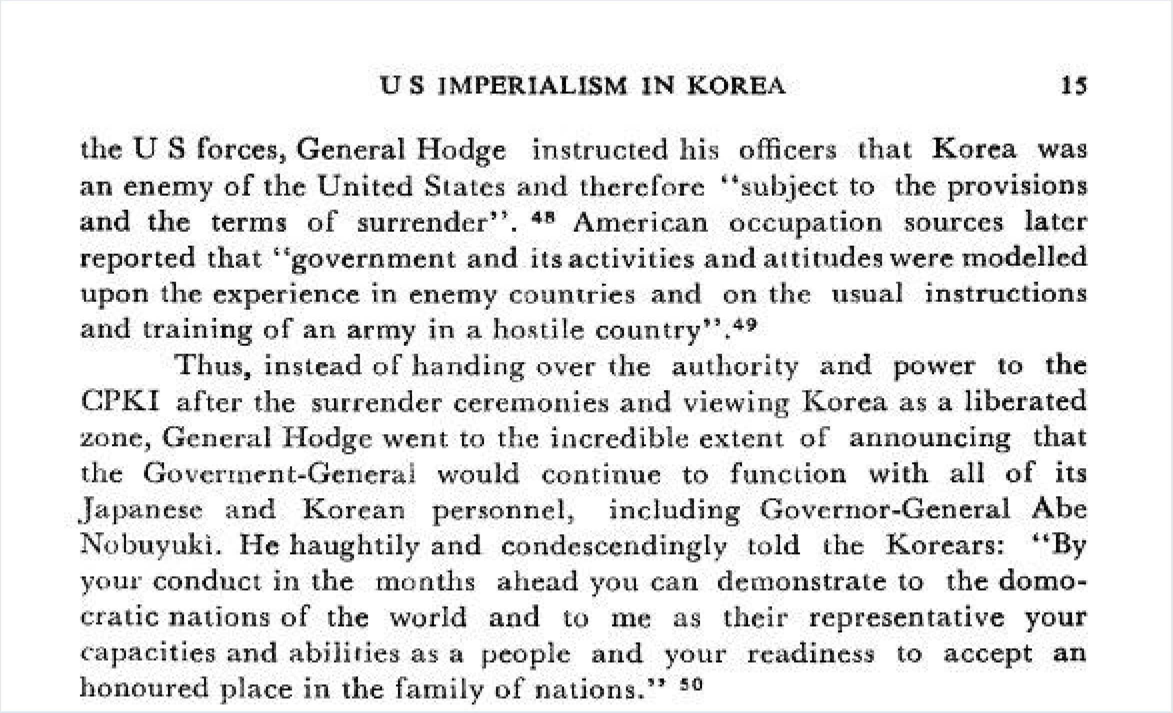
The people's committees functioned as *de facto* politico-administrative organs pending formal and complete transfer of power and surrender of the Japanes forces. On September 6, 1945, the CPKI called a meeting of the national Assembly in Seoul in which approximately one thousand delegates representing a wide variety of groups and professions throughout the country participated. This Assembly proclaimed the establishment of the Korean People's Republic.[47] The Soviet forces which had successfully engaged the Japanese forces in Korea recognised the people's committees in the area north of the 38th parallel and turned over the administrative authority to them in August 25. Thus, in August-September 1945, the Korean people established a broad national *de facto* administration which had effective control over the whole peninsula.

Reactions from the Red Army and US Army say a lot. So what did the US do? They saw the names "People's Republic" and "people's committees" and lost their damn minds.



Invasion of Korea in 1945

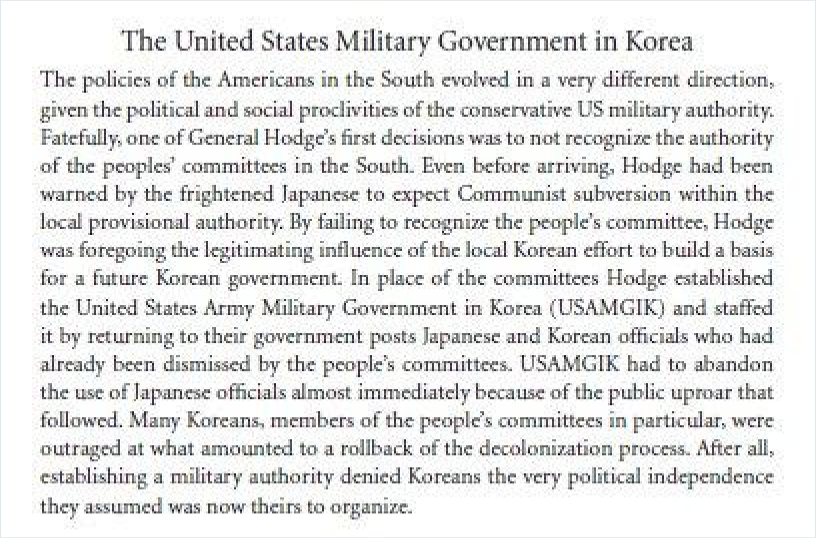
It was in this political situation that the U S forces under the command of General John Reed Hodge as the Commanding General of U S Armed Forces in Korea (USAFIK) arrived in Inchon on September, 8 1945. If the purpose of those forces was only to accept the surrender of the Japanese forces stationed in the area south of the 38th parallel, they would have left after the brief and formal surrender ceremonies were over on September 9, 1945. That it was not their main purpose became clear from the way they perceived the situation in Korea and their own self-assigned role much befor their arrival. Proceeding from the strange view that the area south of the 38th parallel should be treated as an "occupation zone or enemy zone", not as a "liberated zone", they soon imposed their military government in Korea. It was a strange view because they refused to make any



the U S forces, General Hodge instructed his officers that Korea was an enemy of the United States and therefore "subject to the provisions and the terms of surrender". [48] American occupation sources later reported that "government and its activities and attitudes were modelled upon the experience in enemy countries and on the usual instructions and training of an army in a hostile country".[49]

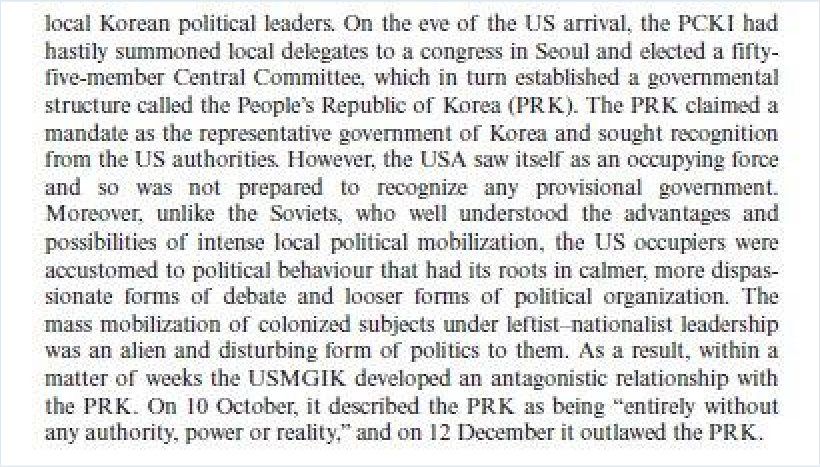
Thus, instead of handing over the authority and power to the CPKI after the surrender ceremonies and viewing Korea as a liberated zone, General Hodge went to the incredible extent of announcing that the Goverment-General would continue to function with all of its Japanese and Korean personnel, including Governor-General Abe Nobuyuki. He haughtily and condescendingly told the Korears: "By your conduct in the months ahead you can demonstrate to the domocratic nations of the world and to me as their representative your capacities and abilities as a people and your readiness to accept an honoured place in the family of nations." [50]

Rather than recognize this homegrown governmental structure, General John Reed Hodge was determined to stamp his country's will on what he saw as a dangerous experiment.

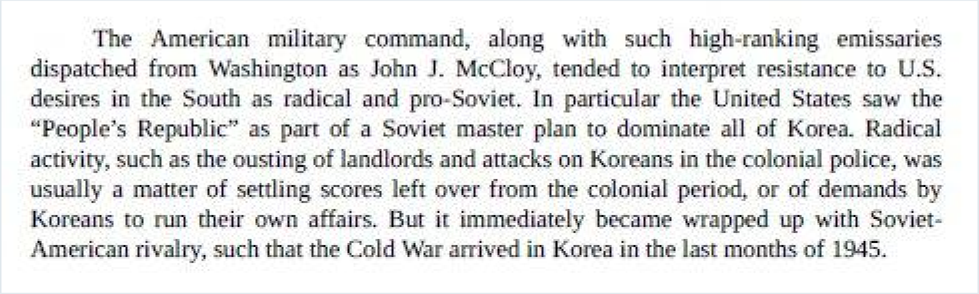


The United States Military Government in Korea

The policies of the Americans in the South evolved in a very different direction, given the political and social proclivities of the conservative US military authority. Fatefully, one of General Hodge's first decisions was to not recognize the authority of the peoples' committees in the South. Even before arriving, Hodge had been warned by the frightened Japanese to expect Communist subversion within the local provisional authority. By failing to recognize the people's committee, Hodge was foregoing the legitimating influence of the local Korean effort to build a basis for a future Korean government. In place of the committees Hodge established the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) and staffed it by returning to their government posts Japanese and Korean officials who had already been dismissed by the people's committees. USAMGIK had to abandon the use of Japanese officials almost immediately because of the public uproar that followed. Many Koreans, members of the people's committees in particular, were outraged at what amounted to a rollback of the decolonization process. After all, establishing a military authority denied Koreans the very political independence they assumed was now theirs to organize.

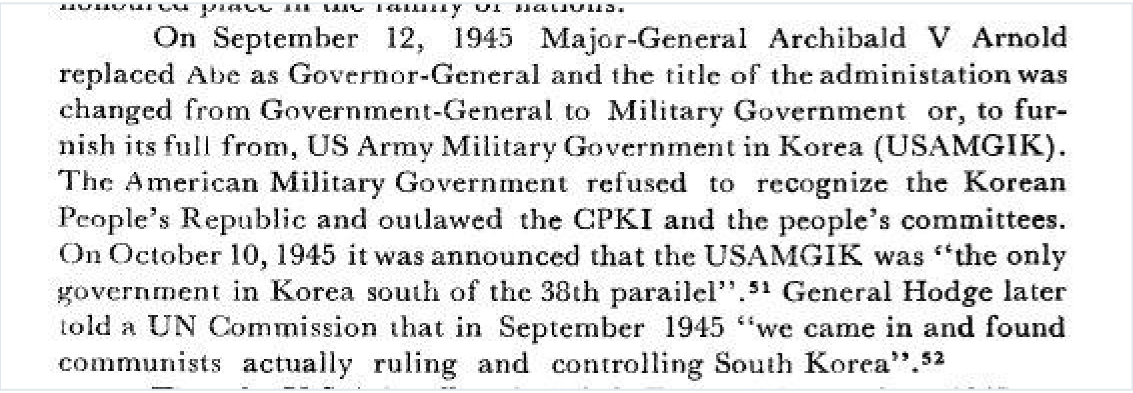


local Korean political leaders. On the eve of the US arrival, the PCKI had hastily summoned local delegates to a congress in Seoul and elected a fifty-five-member Central Committee, which in turn established a governmental structure called the People's Republic of Korea (PRK). The PRK claimed a mandate as the representative government of Korea and sought recognition from the US authorities. However, the USA saw itself as an occupying force and so was not prepared to recognize any provisional government. Moreover, unlike the Soviets, who well understood the advantages and possibilities of intense local political mobilization, the US occupiers were accustomed to political behaviour that had its roots in calmer, more dispassionate forms of debate and looser forms of political organization. The mass mobilization of colonized subjects under leftist–nationalist leadership was an alien and disturbing form of politics to them. As a result, within a matter of weeks the USMGIK developed an antagonistic relationship with the PRK. On 10 October, it described the PRK as being "entirely without any authority, power or reality," and on 12 December it outlawed the PRK.



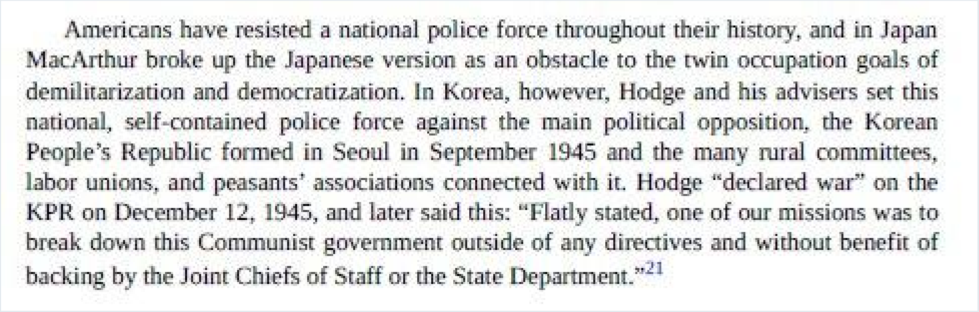
The American military command, along with such high-ranking emissaries dispatched from Washington as John J. McCloy, tended to interpret resistance to U.S. desires in the South as radical and pro-Soviet. In particular the United States saw the "People's Republic" as part of a Soviet master plan to dominate all of Korea. Radical activity, such as the ousting of landlords and attacks on Koreans in the colonial police, was usually a matter of settling scores left over from the colonial period, or of demands by Koreans to run their own affairs. But it immediately became wrapped up with Soviet-American rivalry, such that the Cold War arrived in Korea in the last months of 1945.

Hodge felt no need to sugarcoat his intentions. The mission was to "break down" what was seen as a "Communist government."



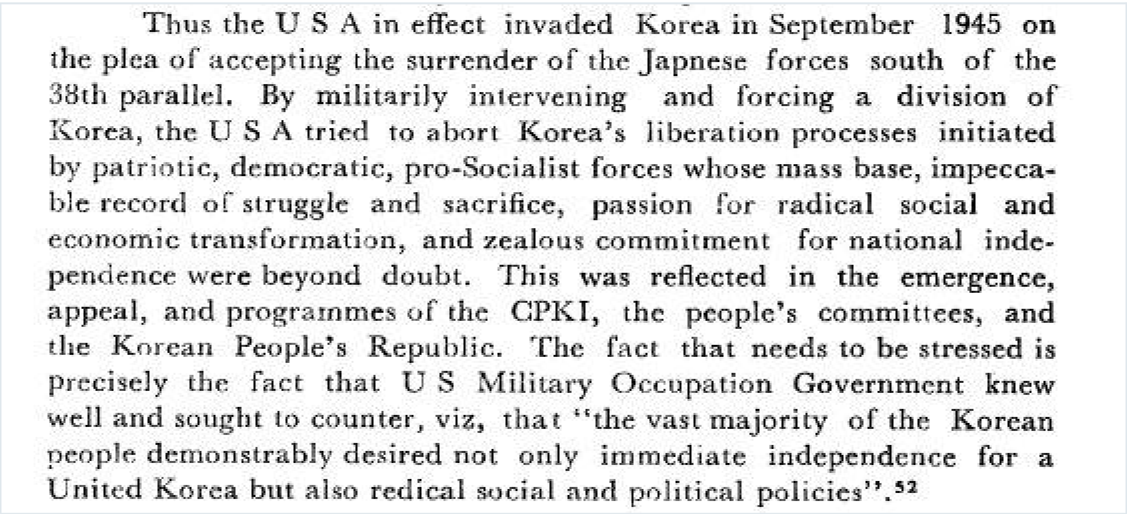
honoured place in the family of nations.

On September 12, 1945 Major-General Archibald V Arnold replaced Abe as Governor-General and the title of the administation was changed from Government-General to Military Government or, to furnish its full from, US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). The American Military Government refused to recognize the Korean People's Republic and outlawed the CPKI and the people's committees. On October 10, 1945 it was announced that the USAMGIK was "the only government in Korea south of the 38th parailel".[51] General Hodge later told a UN Commission that in September 1945 "we came in and found communists actually ruling and controlling South Korea".[52]



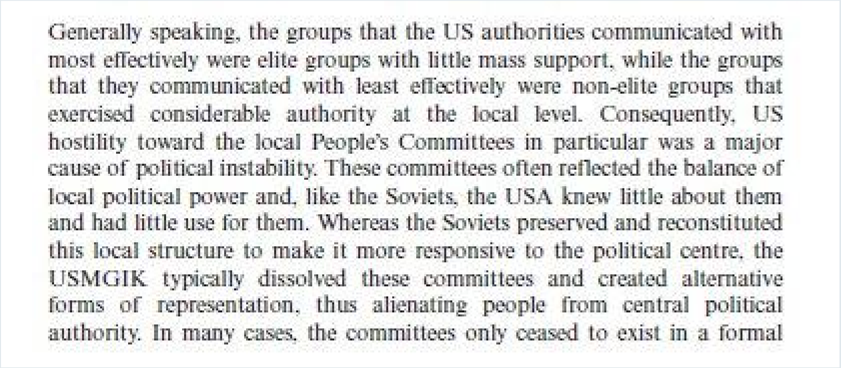
Americans have resisted a national police force throughout their history, and in Japan MacArthur broke up the Japanese version as an obstacle to the twin occupation goals of demilitarization and democratization. In Korea, however, Hodge and his advisers set this national, self-contained police force against the main political opposition, the Korean People's Republic formed in Seoul in September 1945 and the many rural committees, labor unions, and peasants' associations connected with it. Hodge "declared war" on the KPR on December 12, 1945, and later said this: "Flatly stated, one of our missions was to break down this Communist government outside of any directives and without benefit of backing by the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the State Department."[21]

This sums it up nicely.

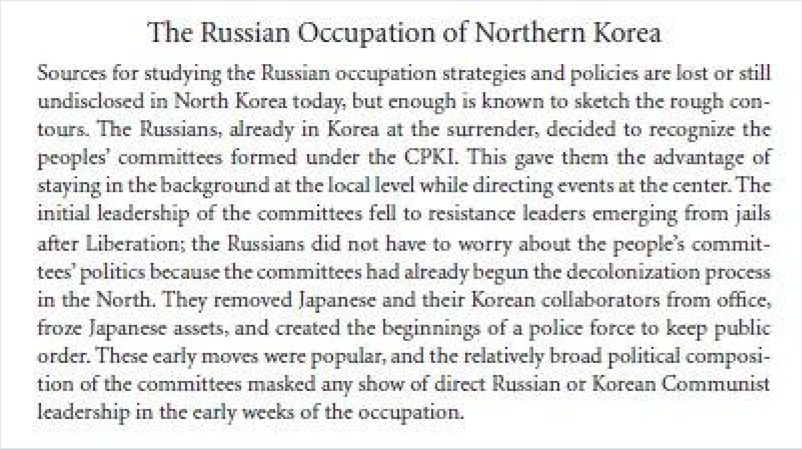


Thus the U S A in effect invaded Korea in September 1945 on the plea of accepting the surrender of the Japnese forces south of the 38th parallel. By militarily intervening and forcing a division of Korea, the U S A tried to abort Korea's liberation processes initiated by patriotic, democratic, pro-Socialist forces whose mass base, impeccable record of struggle and sacrifice, passion for radical social and economic transformation, and zealous commitment for national independence were beyond doubt. This was reflected in the emergence, appeal, and programmes of the CPKI, the people's committees, and the Korean People's Republic. The fact that needs to be stressed is precisely the fact that U S Military Occupation Government knew well and sought to counter, viz, that "the vast majority of the Korean people demonstrably desired not only immediate independence for a United Korea but also redical social and political policies".[52]

What, then, did the Soviets do? If you said "the exact opposite," great work - because you're correct. The Red Army recognized the people's committees, the CPKI and the People's Republic.

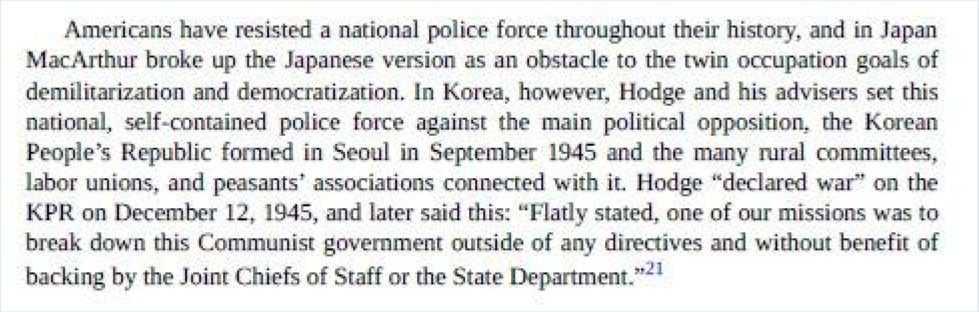


Generally speaking, the groups that the US authorities communicated with most effectively were elite groups with little mass support, while the groups that they communicated with least effectively were non-elite groups that exercised considerable authority at the local level. Consequently, US hostility toward the local People's Committees in particular was a major cause of political instability. These committees often reflected the balance of local political power and, like the Soviets, the USA knew little about them and had little use for them. Whereas the Soviets preserved and reconstituted this local structure to make it more responsive to the political centre, the USMGIK typically dissolved these committees and created alternative forms of representation, thus alienating people from central political authority. In many cases, the committees only ceased to exist in a formal



The Russian Occupation of Northern Korea

Sources for studying the Russian occupation strategies and policies are lost or still undisclosed in North Korea today, but enough is known to sketch the rough contours. The Russians, already in Korea at the surrender, decided to recognize the peoples' committees formed under the CPKI. This gave them the advantage of staying in the background at the local level while directing events at the center. The initial leadership of the committees fell to resistance leaders emerging from jails after Liberation; the Russians did not have to worry about the people's committees' politics because the committees had already begun the decolonization process in the North. They removed Japanese and their Korean collaborators from office, froze Japanese assets, and created the beginnings of a police force to keep public order. These early moves were popular, and the relatively broad political composition of the committees masked any show of direct Russian or Korean Communist leadership in the early weeks of the occupation.



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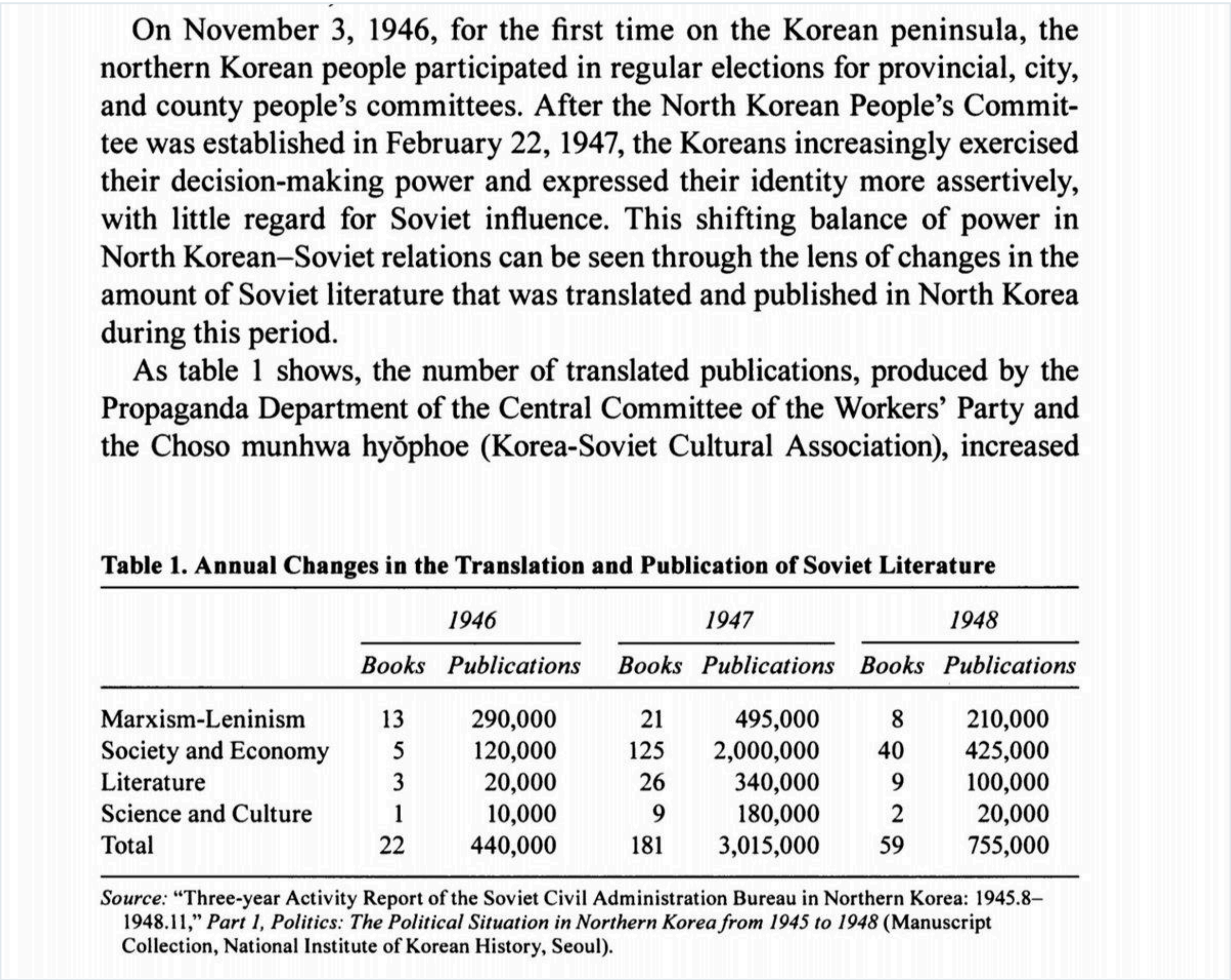
It's true the Soviets had reason to maintain these structures besides altruism. But the history of the Korean communist movement, and the actual relations between countries, belie the idea the north was simply a puppet state.



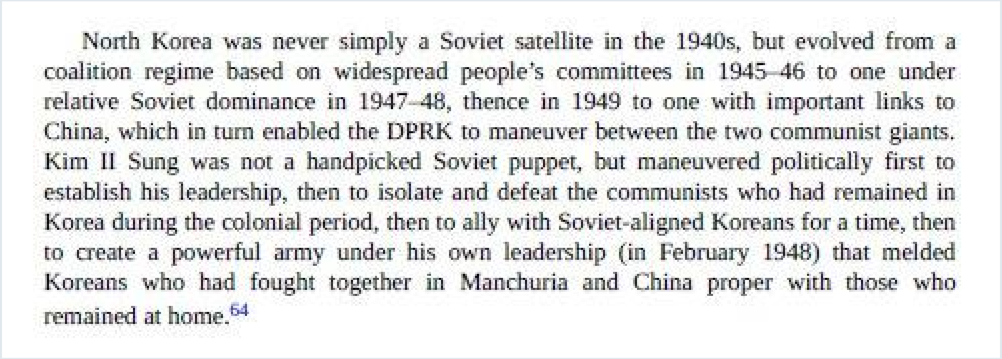
On November 3, 1946, for the first time on the Korean peninsula, the northern Korean people participated in regular elections for provincial, city, and county people's committees. After the North Korean People's Committee was established in February 22, 1947, the Koreans increasingly exercised their decision-making power and expressed their identity more assertively, with little regard for Soviet influence. This shifting balance of power in North Korean–Soviet relations can be seen through the lens of changes in the amount of Soviet literature that was translated and published in North Korea during this period.

As table 1 shows, the number of translated publications, produced by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party and the Choso munhwa hyŏphoe (Korea-Soviet Cultural Association), increased

Table 1. Annual Changes in the Translation and Publication of Soviet Literature

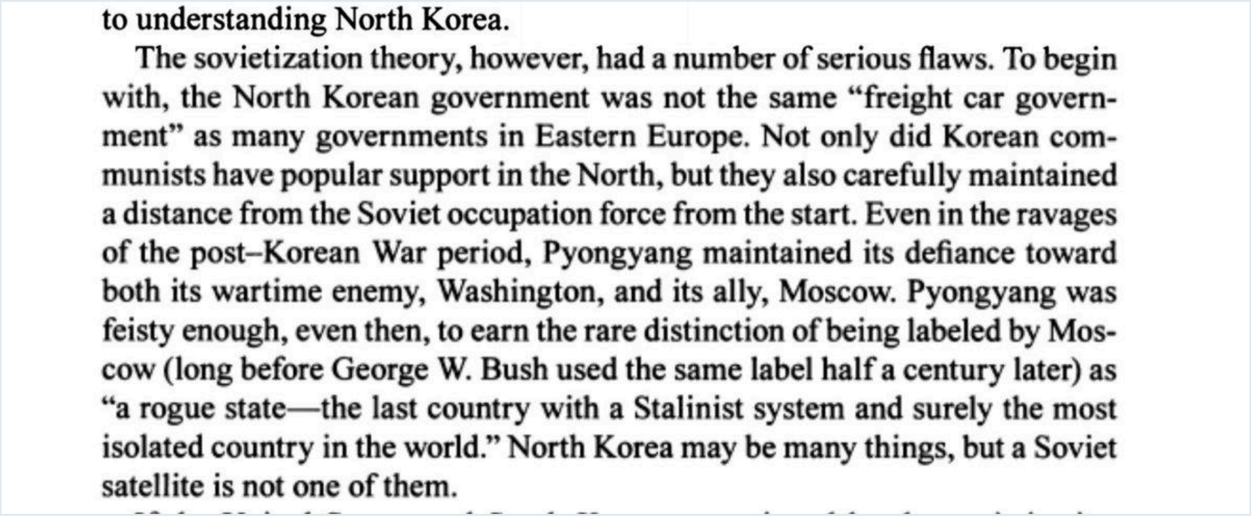
	1946		*1947*		*1948*	
	Books	*Publications*	*Books*	*Publications*	*Books*	*Publications*
Marxism-Leninism	13	290,000	21	495,000	8	210,000
Society and Economy	5	120,000	125	2,000,000	40	425,000
Literature	3	20,000	26	340,000	9	100,000
Science and Culture	1	10,000	9	180,000	2	20,000
Total	22	440,000	181	3,015,000	59	755,000

Source: "Three-year Activity Report of the Soviet Civil Administration Bureau in Northern Korea: 1945.8–1948.11," *Part 1, Politics: The Political Situation in Northern Korea from 1945 to 1948* (Manuscript Collection, National Institute of Korean History, Seoul).



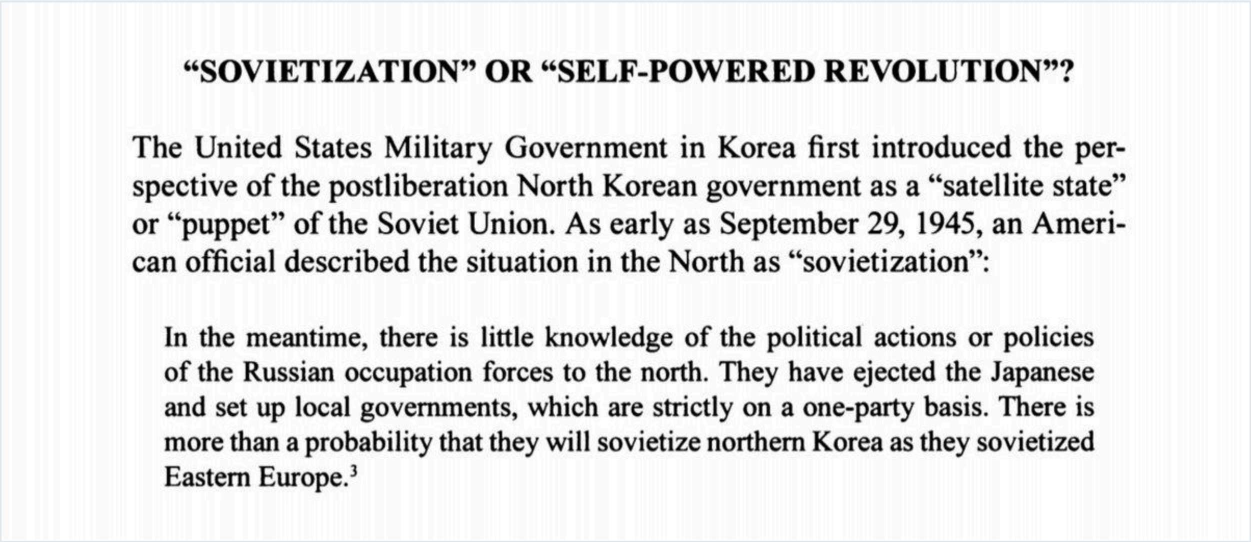
North Korea was never simply a Soviet satellite in the 1940s, but evolved from a coalition regime based on widespread people's committees in 1945–46 to one under relative Soviet dominance in 1947–48, thence in 1949 to one with important links to China, which in turn enabled the DPRK to maneuver between the two communist giants. Kim Il Sung was not a handpicked Soviet puppet, but maneuvered politically first to establish his leadership, then to isolate and defeat the communists who had remained in Korea during the colonial period, then to ally with Soviet-aligned Koreans for a time, then to create a powerful army under his own leadership (in February 1948) that melded Koreans who had fought together in Manchuria and China proper with those who remained at home.[64]

Oh, and the notion of the DPRK as Soviet satellite was first pushed by the US State Department. Big surprise.



to understanding North Korea.

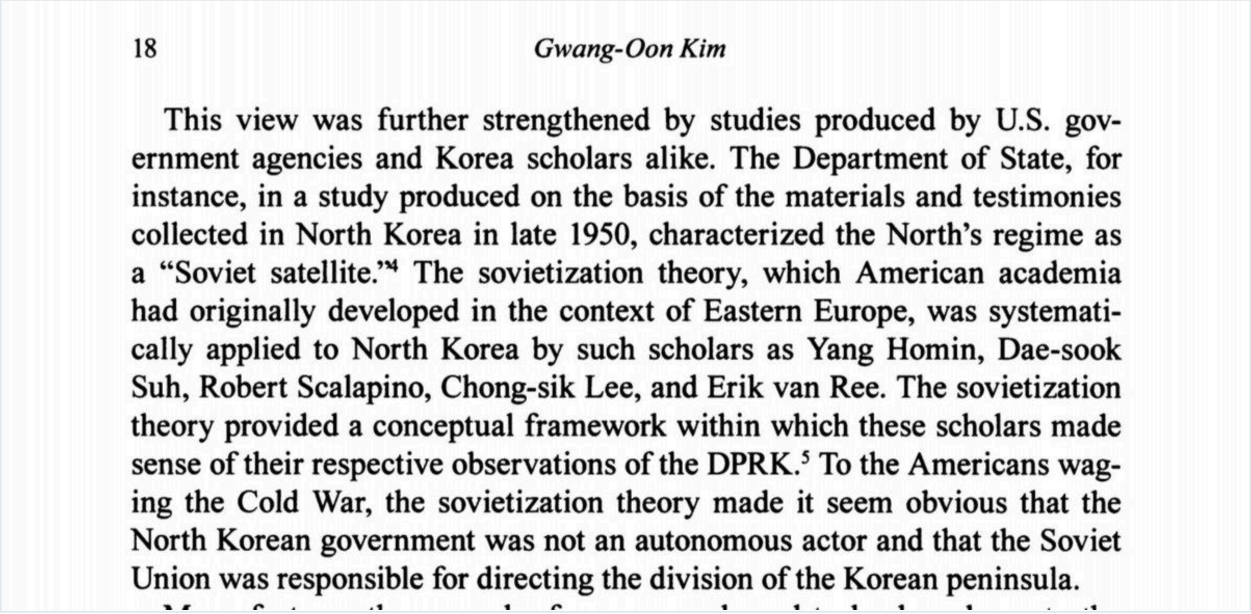
The sovietization theory, however, had a number of serious flaws. To begin with, the North Korean government was not the same "freight car government" as many governments in Eastern Europe. Not only did Korean communists have popular support in the North, but they also carefully maintained a distance from the Soviet occupation force from the start. Even in the ravages of the post–Korean War period, Pyongyang maintained its defiance toward both its wartime enemy, Washington, and its ally, Moscow. Pyongyang was feisty enough, even then, to earn the rare distinction of being labeled by Moscow (long before George W. Bush used the same label half a century later) as "a rogue state—the last country with a Stalinist system and surely the most isolated country in the world." North Korea may be many things, but a Soviet satellite is not one of them.



"SOVIETIZATION" OR "SELF-POWERED REVOLUTION"?

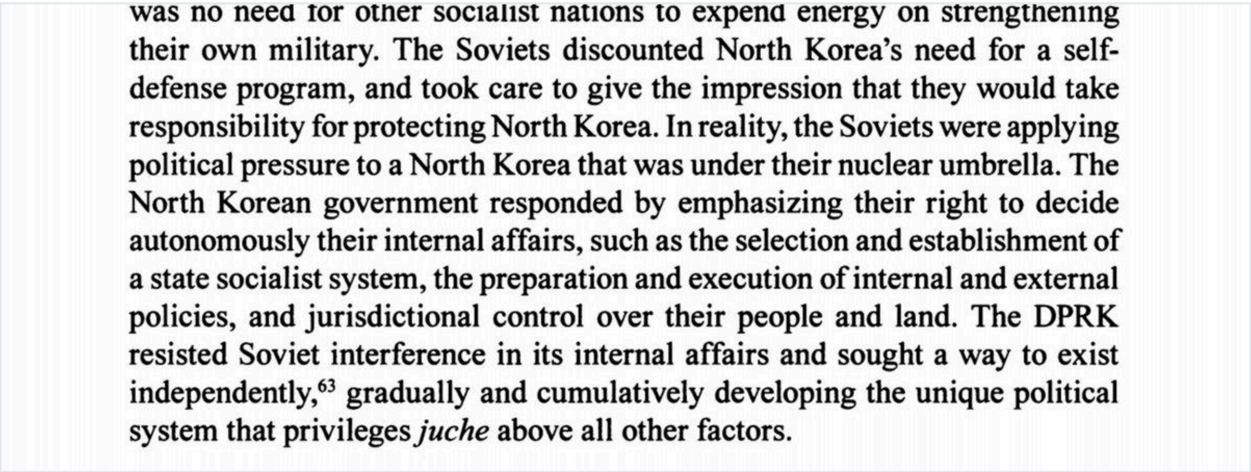
The United States Military Government in Korea first introduced the perspective of the postliberation North Korean government as a "satellite state" or "puppet" of the Soviet Union. As early as September 29, 1945, an American official described the situation in the North as "sovietization":

> In the meantime, there is little knowledge of the political actions or policies of the Russian occupation forces to the north. They have ejected the Japanese and set up local governments, which are strictly on a one-party basis. There is more than a probability that they will sovietize northern Korea as they sovietized Eastern Europe.[3]

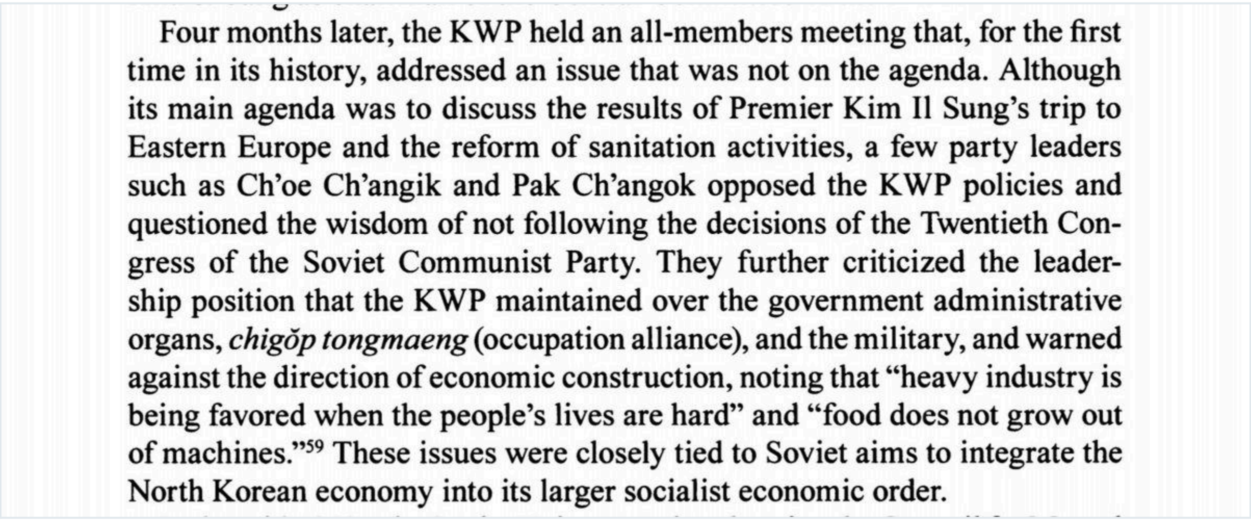


This view was further strengthened by studies produced by U.S. government agencies and Korea scholars alike. The Department of State, for instance, in a study produced on the basis of the materials and testimonies collected in North Korea in late 1950, characterized the North's regime as a "Soviet satellite."[4] The sovietization theory, which American academia had originally developed in the context of Eastern Europe, was systematically applied to North Korea by such scholars as Yang Homin, Dae-sook Suh, Robert Scalapino, Chong-sik Lee, and Erik van Ree. The sovietization theory provided a conceptual framework within which these scholars made sense of their respective observations of the DPRK.[5] To the Americans waging the Cold War, the sovietization theory made it seem obvious that the North Korean government was not an autonomous actor and that the Soviet Union was responsible for directing the division of the Korean peninsula.

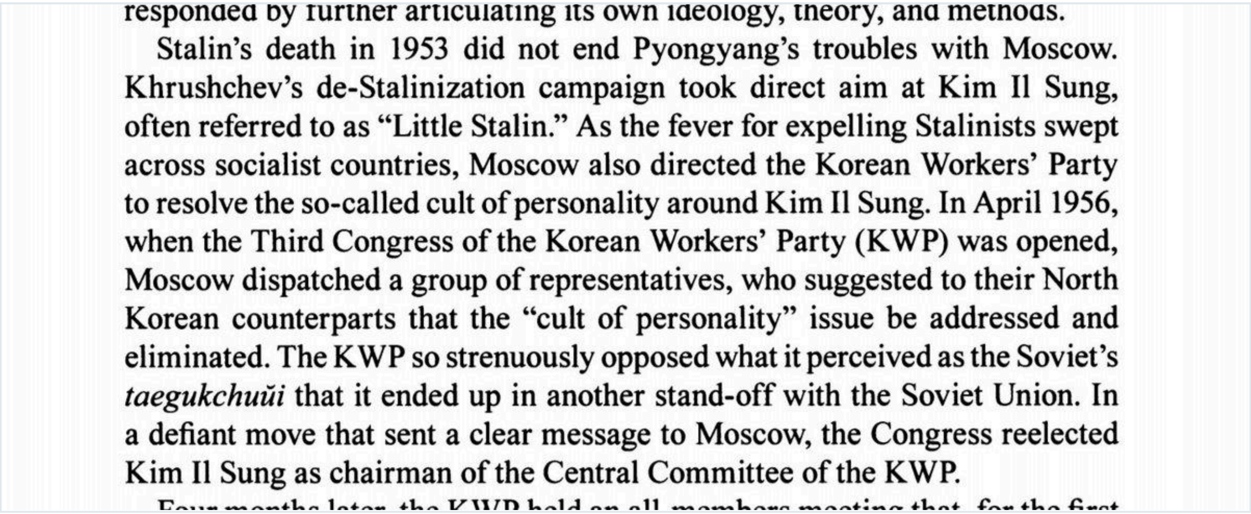
Koreans in the north were rarely amenable to Soviet designs, even after the establishment of the DPRK.



was no need for other socialist nations to expend energy on strengthening their own military. The Soviets discounted North Korea's need for a self-defense program, and took care to give the impression that they would take responsibility for protecting North Korea. In reality, the Soviets were applying political pressure to a North Korea that was under their nuclear umbrella. The North Korean government responded by emphasizing their right to decide autonomously their internal affairs, such as the selection and establishment of a state socialist system, the preparation and execution of internal and external policies, and jurisdictional control over their people and land. The DPRK resisted Soviet interference in its internal affairs and sought a way to exist independently,[63] gradually and cumulatively developing the unique political system that privileges *juche* above all other factors.

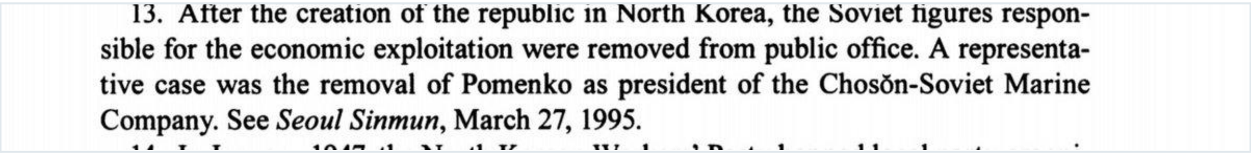


Four months later, the KWP held an all-members meeting that, for the first time in its history, addressed an issue that was not on the agenda. Although its main agenda was to discuss the results of Premier Kim Il Sung's trip to Eastern Europe and the reform of sanitation activities, a few party leaders such as Ch'oe Ch'angik and Pak Ch'angok opposed the KWP policies and questioned the wisdom of not following the decisions of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. They further criticized the leadership position that the KWP maintained over the government administrative organs, *chigŏp tongmaeng* (occupation alliance), and the military, and warned against the direction of economic construction, noting that "heavy industry is being favored when the people's lives are hard" and "food does not grow out of machines."[59] These issues were closely tied to Soviet aims to integrate the North Korean economy into its larger socialist economic order.



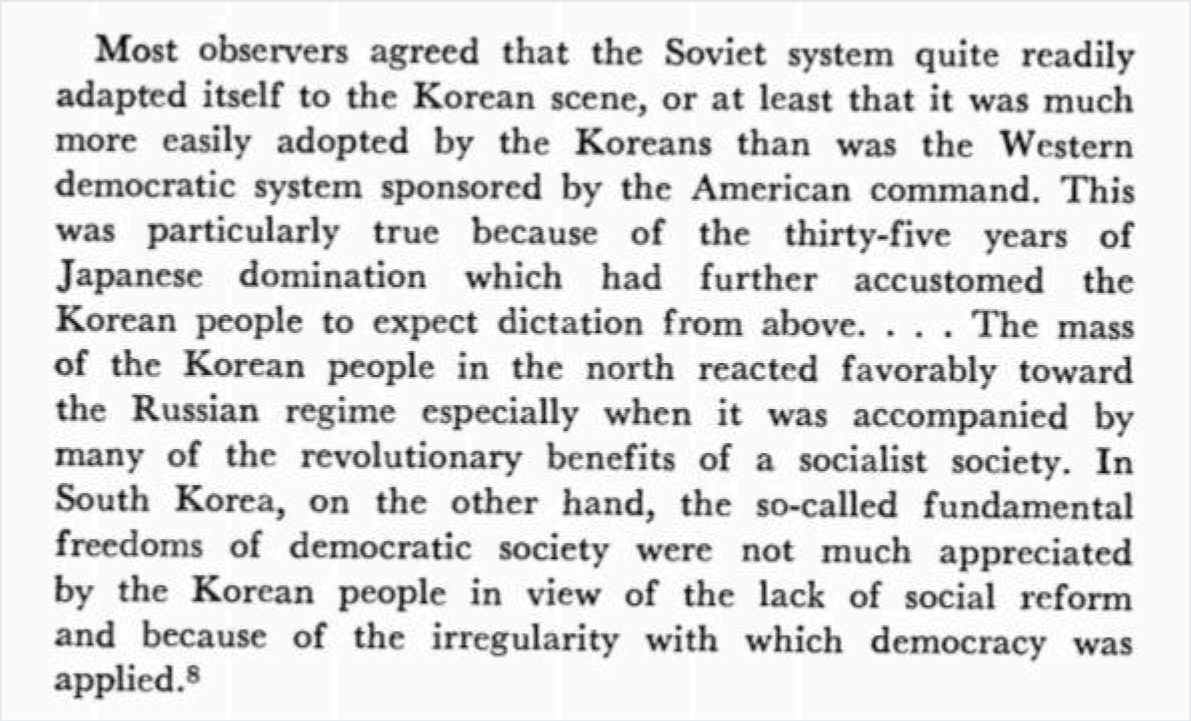
responded by further articulating its own ideology, theory, and methods.

Stalin's death in 1953 did not end Pyongyang's troubles with Moscow. Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign took direct aim at Kim Il Sung, often referred to as "Little Stalin." As the fever for expelling Stalinists swept across socialist countries, Moscow also directed the Korean Workers' Party to resolve the so-called cult of personality around Kim Il Sung. In April 1956, when the Third Congress of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) was opened, Moscow dispatched a group of representatives, who suggested to their North Korean counterparts that the "cult of personality" issue be addressed and eliminated. The KWP so strenuously opposed what it perceived as the Soviet's *taegukchuŭi* that it ended up in another stand-off with the Soviet Union. In a defiant move that sent a clear message to Moscow, the Congress reelected Kim Il Sung as chairman of the Central Committee of the KWP.



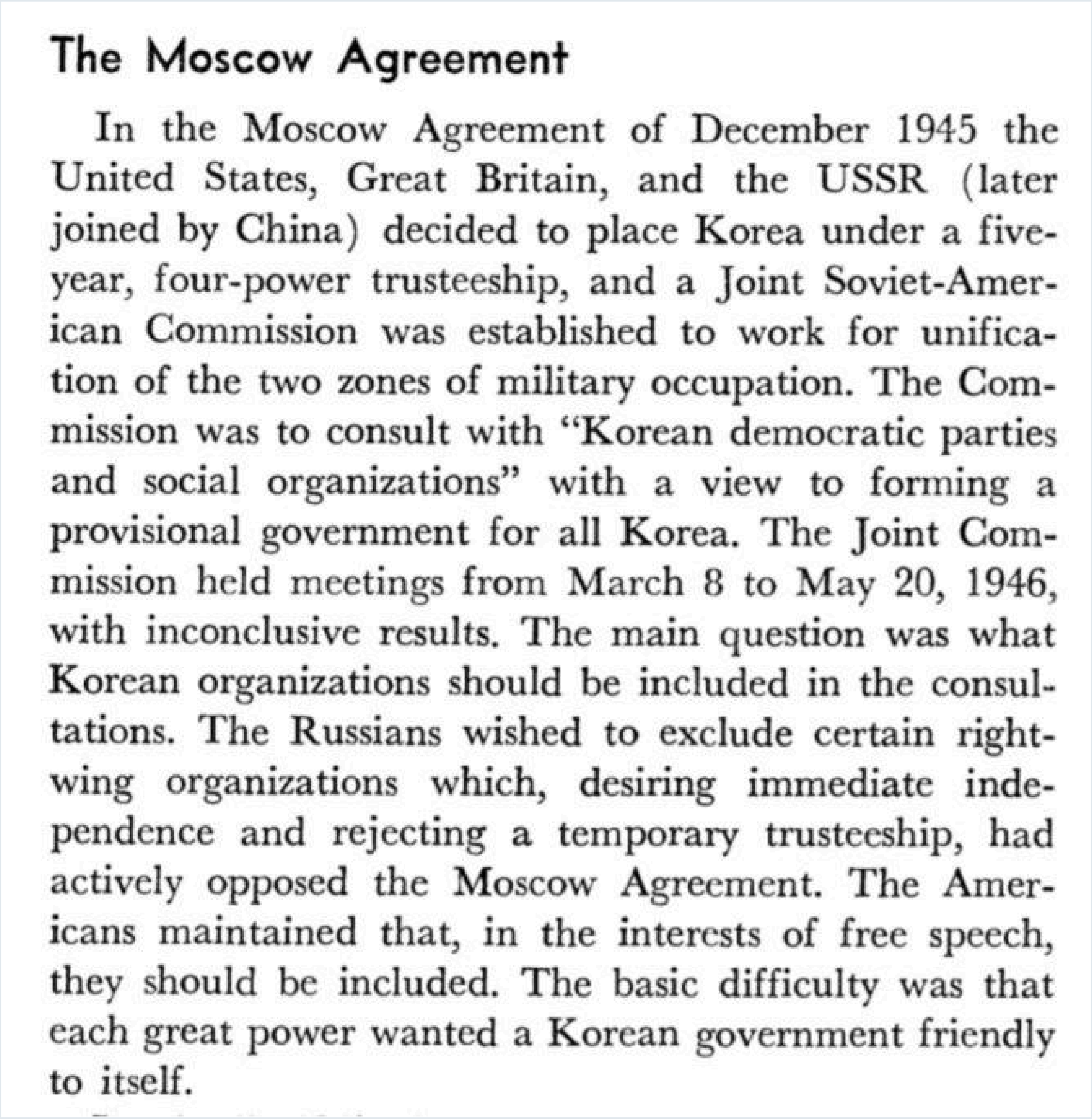
13. After the creation of the republic in North Korea, the Soviet figures responsible for the economic exploitation were removed from public office. A representative case was the removal of Pomenko as president of the Chosŏn-Soviet Marine Company. See *Seoul Sinmun*, March 27, 1995.

OK, and we're back in the period most people know. The Soviets have established a government in the north, the US has one in the south. They are already very different. This person writing in the 1940s lays it out and adds some Orientalism to it. Thanks, probably dead lady!



> Most observers agreed that the Soviet system quite readily adapted itself to the Korean scene, or at least that it was much more easily adopted by the Koreans than was the Western democratic system sponsored by the American command. This was particularly true because of the thirty-five years of Japanese domination which had further accustomed the Korean people to expect dictation from above. . . . The mass of the Korean people in the north reacted favorably toward the Russian regime especially when it was accompanied by many of the revolutionary benefits of a socialist society. In South Korea, on the other hand, the so-called fundamental freedoms of democratic society were not much appreciated by the Korean people in view of the lack of social reform and because of the irregularity with which democracy was applied.[8]

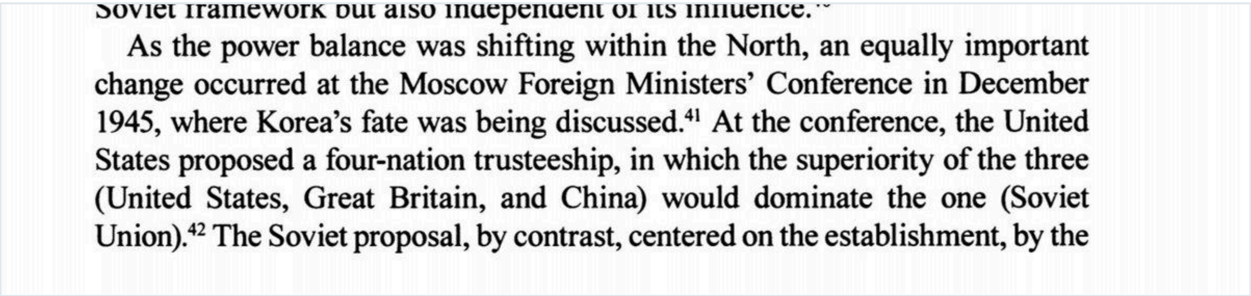
With such ideological divergence, negotiations for the future of Korea already look strained. Nonetheless, the Allies meet in Moscow in December 1945. Everyone wants something different, and the US and Soviet Union both want the peninsula.



The Moscow Agreement

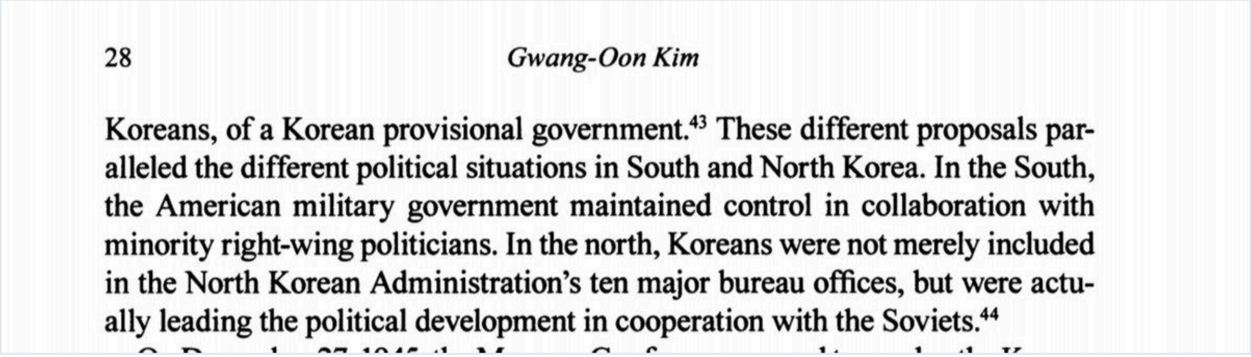
In the Moscow Agreement of December 1945 the United States, Great Britain, and the USSR (later joined by China) decided to place Korea under a five-year, four-power trusteeship, and a Joint Soviet-American Commission was established to work for unification of the two zones of military occupation. The Commission was to consult with "Korean democratic parties and social organizations" with a view to forming a provisional government for all Korea. The Joint Commission held meetings from March 8 to May 20, 1946, with inconclusive results. The main question was what Korean organizations should be included in the consultations. The Russians wished to exclude certain right-wing organizations which, desiring immediate independence and rejecting a temporary trusteeship, had actively opposed the Moscow Agreement. The Americans maintained that, in the interests of free speech, they should be included. The basic difficulty was that each great power wanted a Korean government friendly to itself.

However! Each party's approach is different. The US wants a four-power trusteeship of itself, the USSR, Britain and China. This would conveniently give Western interests a 3-to-1 vote. (Recall that the PRC wasn't founded until 1949.) The Soviets wanted the Koreans themselves to determine their future. Consequently, this desire is reflected in the administration of their zone, with the maintenance of the people's committees and a leading role in the discussion.



Soviet framework but also independent of its influence.

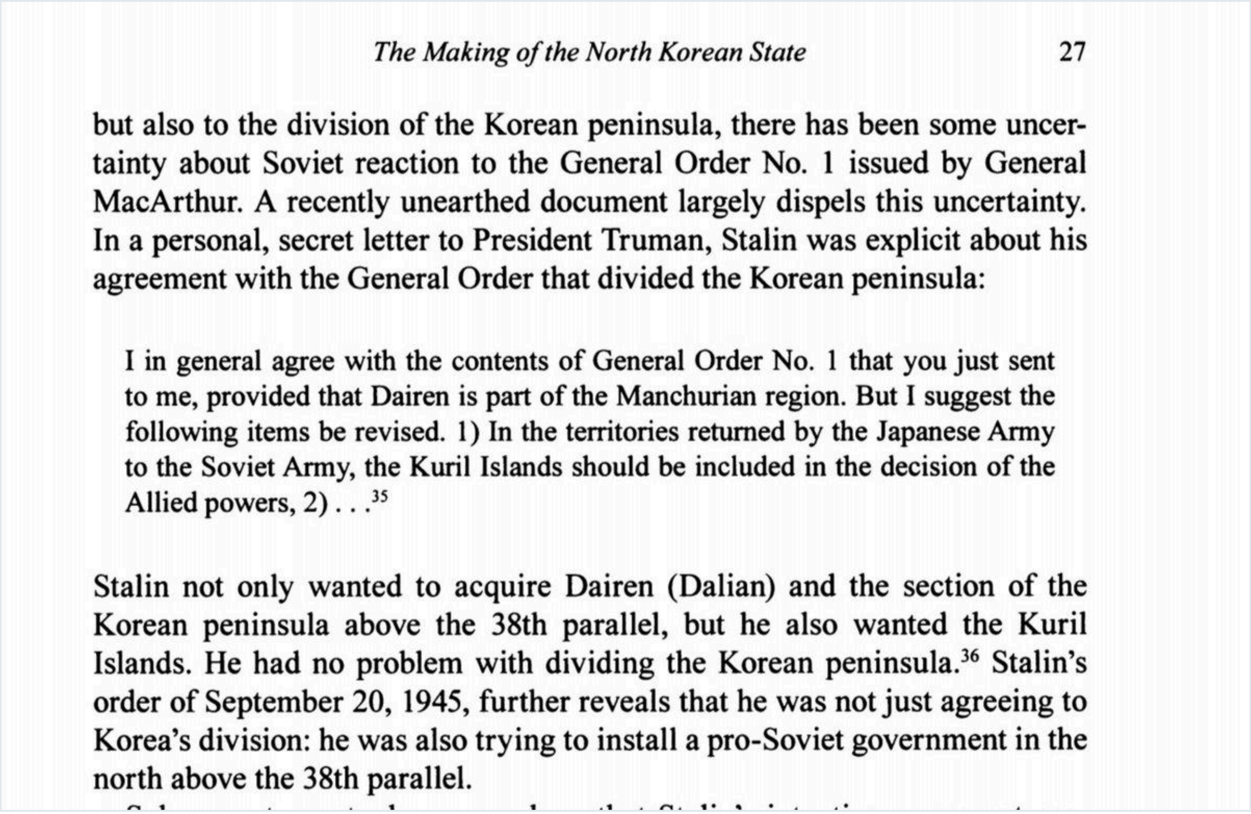
As the power balance was shifting within the North, an equally important change occurred at the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference in December 1945, where Korea's fate was being discussed.[41] At the conference, the United States proposed a four-nation trusteeship, in which the superiority of the three (United States, Great Britain, and China) would dominate the one (Soviet Union).[42] The Soviet proposal, by contrast, centered on the establishment, by the



28 *Gwang-Oon Kim*

Koreans, of a Korean provisional government.[43] These different proposals paralleled the different political situations in South and North Korea. In the South, the American military government maintained control in collaboration with minority right-wing politicians. In the north, Koreans were not merely included in the North Korean Administration's ten major bureau offices, but were actually leading the political development in cooperation with the Soviets.[44]

And again, this wasn't because of warm feelings and pure, kind hearts. The Soviets wanted a friendly government in their occupation zone — but the Koreans still crafted a system of their own.

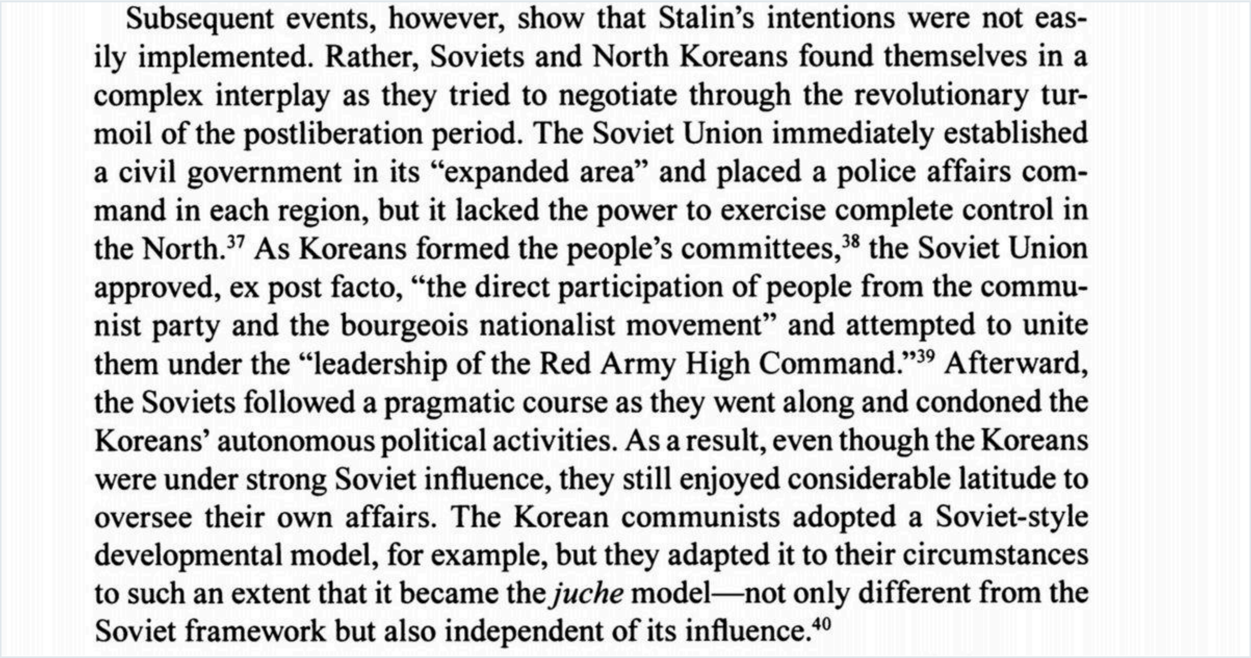


The Making of the North Korean State 27

but also to the division of the Korean peninsula, there has been some uncertainty about Soviet reaction to the General Order No. 1 issued by General MacArthur. A recently unearthed document largely dispels this uncertainty. In a personal, secret letter to President Truman, Stalin was explicit about his agreement with the General Order that divided the Korean peninsula:

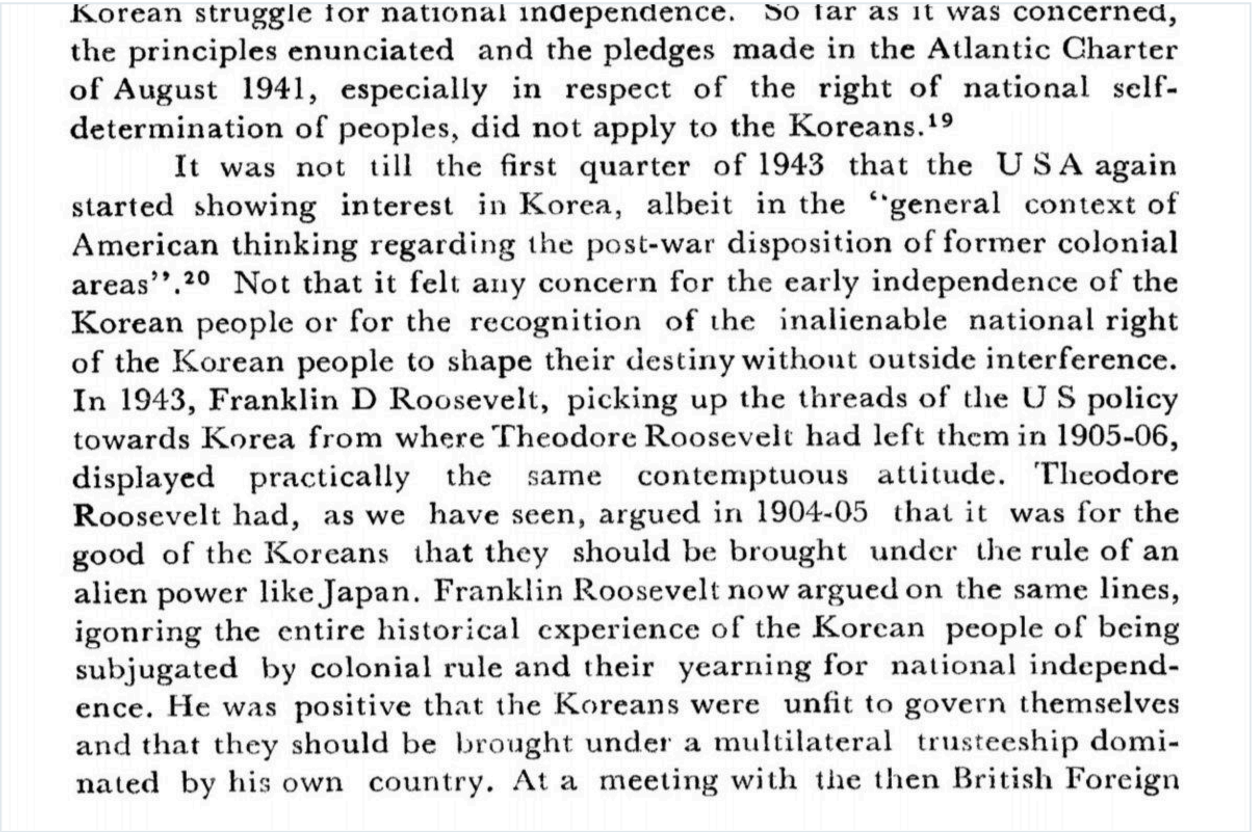
> I in general agree with the contents of General Order No. 1 that you just sent to me, provided that Dairen is part of the Manchurian region. But I suggest the following items be revised. 1) In the territories returned by the Japanese Army to the Soviet Army, the Kuril Islands should be included in the decision of the Allied powers, 2) . . .[35]

Stalin not only wanted to acquire Dairen (Dalian) and the section of the Korean peninsula above the 38th parallel, but he also wanted the Kuril Islands. He had no problem with dividing the Korean peninsula.[36] Stalin's order of September 20, 1945, further reveals that he was not just agreeing to Korea's division: he was also trying to install a pro-Soviet government in the north above the 38th parallel.



Subsequent events, however, show that Stalin's intentions were not easily implemented. Rather, Soviets and North Koreans found themselves in a complex interplay as they tried to negotiate through the revolutionary turmoil of the postliberation period. The Soviet Union immediately established a civil government in its "expanded area" and placed a police affairs command in each region, but it lacked the power to exercise complete control in the North.[37] As Koreans formed the people's committees,[38] the Soviet Union approved, ex post facto, "the direct participation of people from the communist party and the bourgeois nationalist movement" and attempted to unite them under the "leadership of the Red Army High Command."[39] Afterward, the Soviets followed a pragmatic course as they went along and condoned the Koreans' autonomous political activities. As a result, even though the Koreans were under strong Soviet influence, they still enjoyed considerable latitude to oversee their own affairs. The Korean communists adopted a Soviet-style developmental model, for example, but they adapted it to their circumstances to such an extent that it became the *juche* model—not only different from the Soviet framework but also independent of its influence.[40]

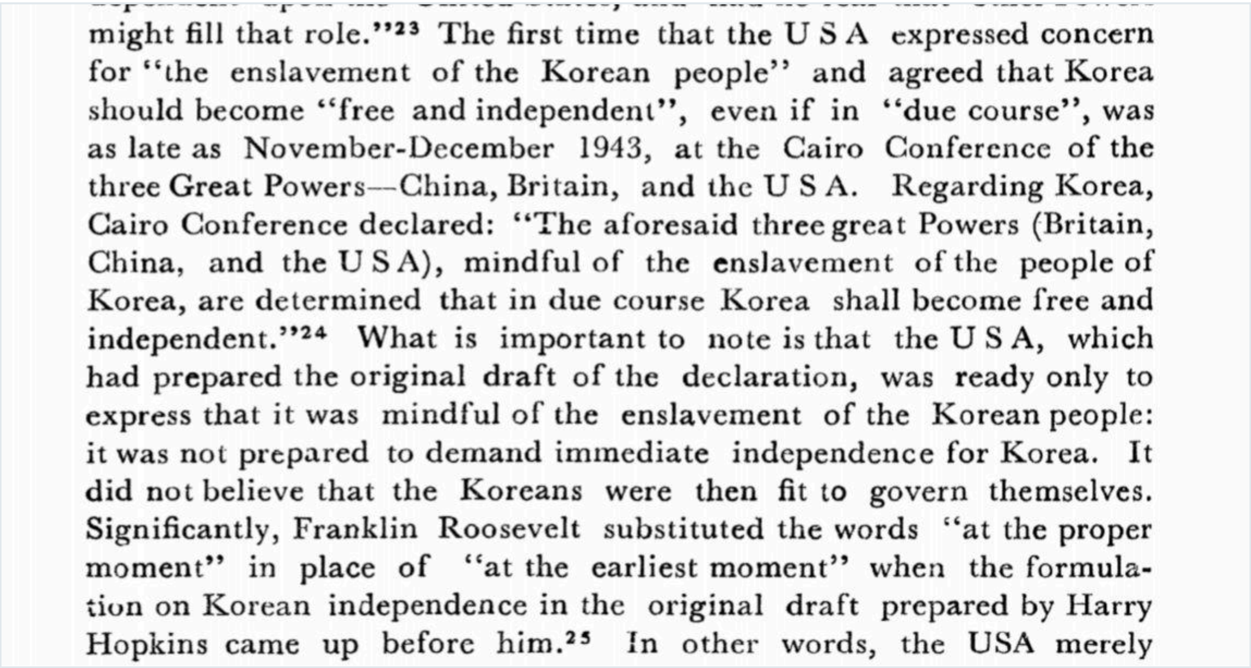
Consider, in contrast, the attitude of the US. After a long silence during the Japan occupation, liberal hero Franklin Roosevelt suddenly discovered he cared about Korea in 1943, as the outcome of the war became inevitable.



Korean struggle for national independence. So far as it was concerned, the principles enunciated and the pledges made in the Atlantic Charter of August 1941, especially in respect of the right of national self-determination of peoples, did not apply to the Koreans.[19]

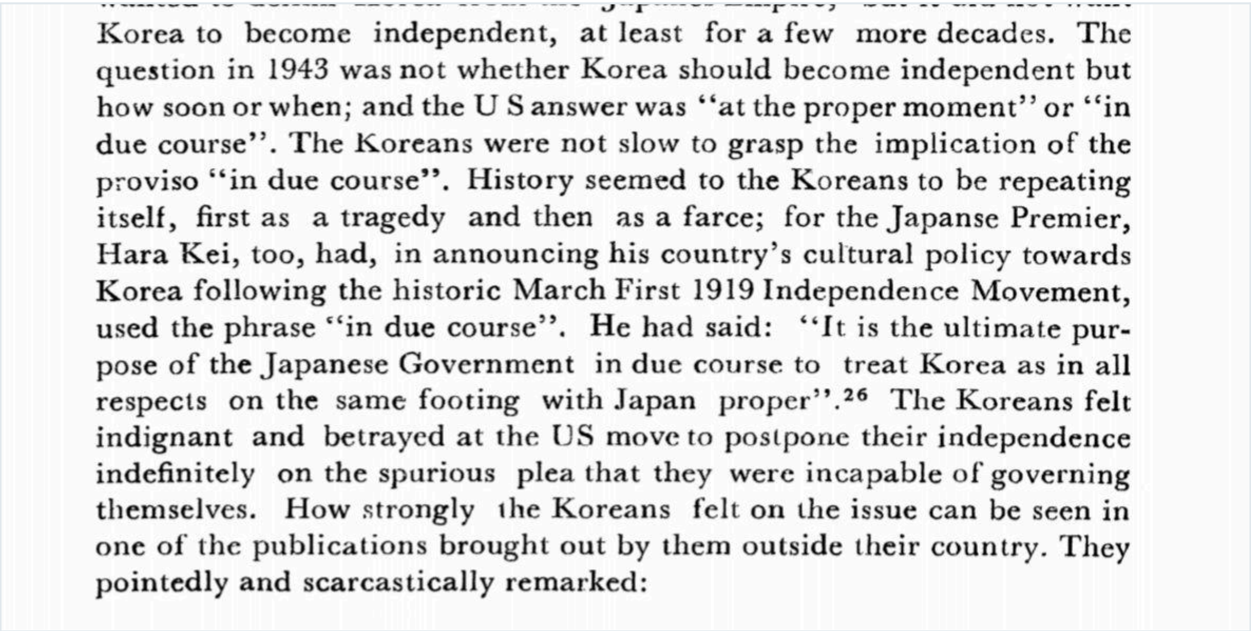
It was not till the first quarter of 1943 that the U S A again started showing interest in Korea, albeit in the "general context of American thinking regarding the post-war disposition of former colonial areas".[20] Not that it felt any concern for the early independence of the Korean people or for the recognition of the inalienable national right of the Korean people to shape their destiny without outside interference. In 1943, Franklin D Roosevelt, picking up the threads of the U S policy towards Korea from where Theodore Roosevelt had left them in 1905-06, displayed practically the same contemptuous attitude. Theodore Roosevelt had, as we have seen, argued in 1904-05 that it was for the good of the Koreans that they should be brought under the rule of an alien power like Japan. Franklin Roosevelt now argued on the same lines, igonring the entire historical experience of the Korean people of being subjugated by colonial rule and their yearning for national independence. He was positive that the Koreans were unfit to govern themselves and that they should be brought under a multilateral trusteeship dominated by his own country. At a meeting with the then British Foreign

At the Cairo Conference, the US was responsible for draft statements which prevaricated on the issue of Korean independence. Roosevelt himself made the key change from independence "at the earliest moment" to "at the proper moment."

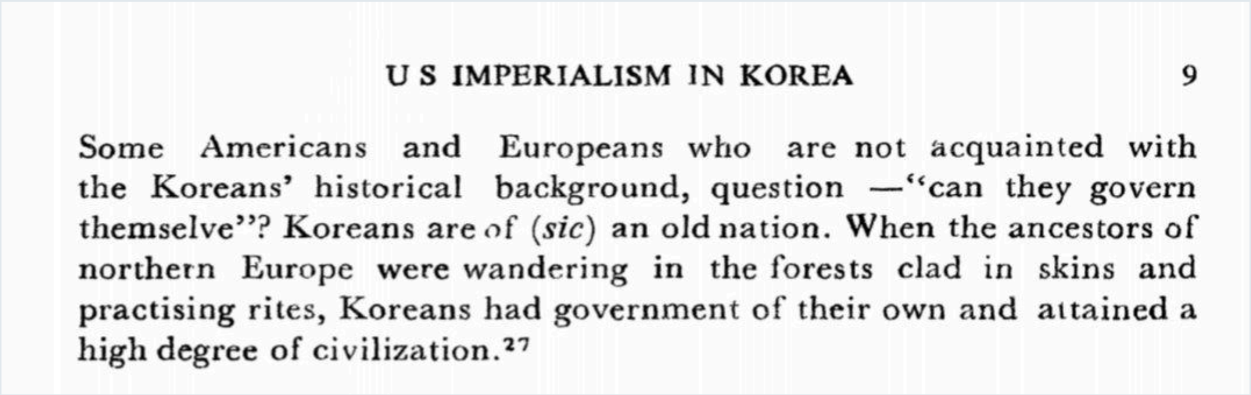


might fill that role.”[23] The first time that the U S A expressed concern for “the enslavement of the Korean people” and agreed that Korea should become “free and independent”, even if in “due course”, was as late as November-December 1943, at the Cairo Conference of the three Great Powers—China, Britain, and the U S A. Regarding Korea, Cairo Conference declared: “The aforesaid three great Powers (Britain, China, and the U S A), mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.”[24] What is important to note is that the U S A, which had prepared the original draft of the declaration, was ready only to express that it was mindful of the enslavement of the Korean people: it was not prepared to demand immediate independence for Korea. It did not believe that the Koreans were then fit to govern themselves. Significantly, Franklin Roosevelt substituted the words “at the proper moment” in place of “at the earliest moment” when the formulation on Korean independence in the original draft prepared by Harry Hopkins came up before him.[25] In other words, the USA merely

This, plus the phrase “in due course,” carries great meaning for the Koreans. These rhetorical tricks were tantamount to a national insult.



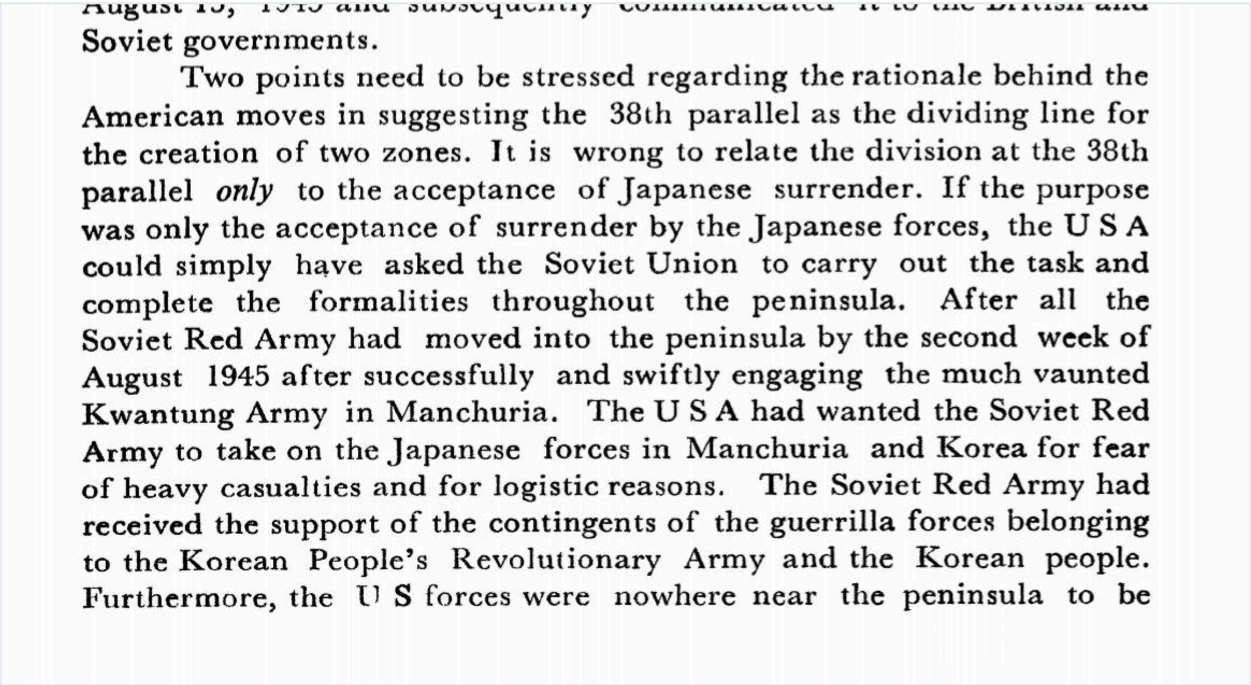
Korea to become independent, at least for a few more decades. The question in 1943 was not whether Korea should become independent but how soon or when; and the U S answer was “at the proper moment” or “in due course”. The Koreans were not slow to grasp the implication of the proviso “in due course”. History seemed to the Koreans to be repeating itself, first as a tragedy and then as a farce; for the Japanse Premier, Hara Kei, too, had, in announcing his country’s cultural policy towards Korea following the historic March First 1919 Independence Movement, used the phrase “in due course”. He had said: “It is the ultimate purpose of the Japanese Government in due course to treat Korea as in all respects on the same footing with Japan proper”.[26] The Koreans felt indignant and betrayed at the US move to postpone their independence indefinitely on the spurious plea that they were incapable of governing themselves. How strongly the Koreans felt on the issue can be seen in one of the publications brought out by them outside their country. They pointedly and scarcastically remarked:



U S IMPERIALISM IN KOREA 9

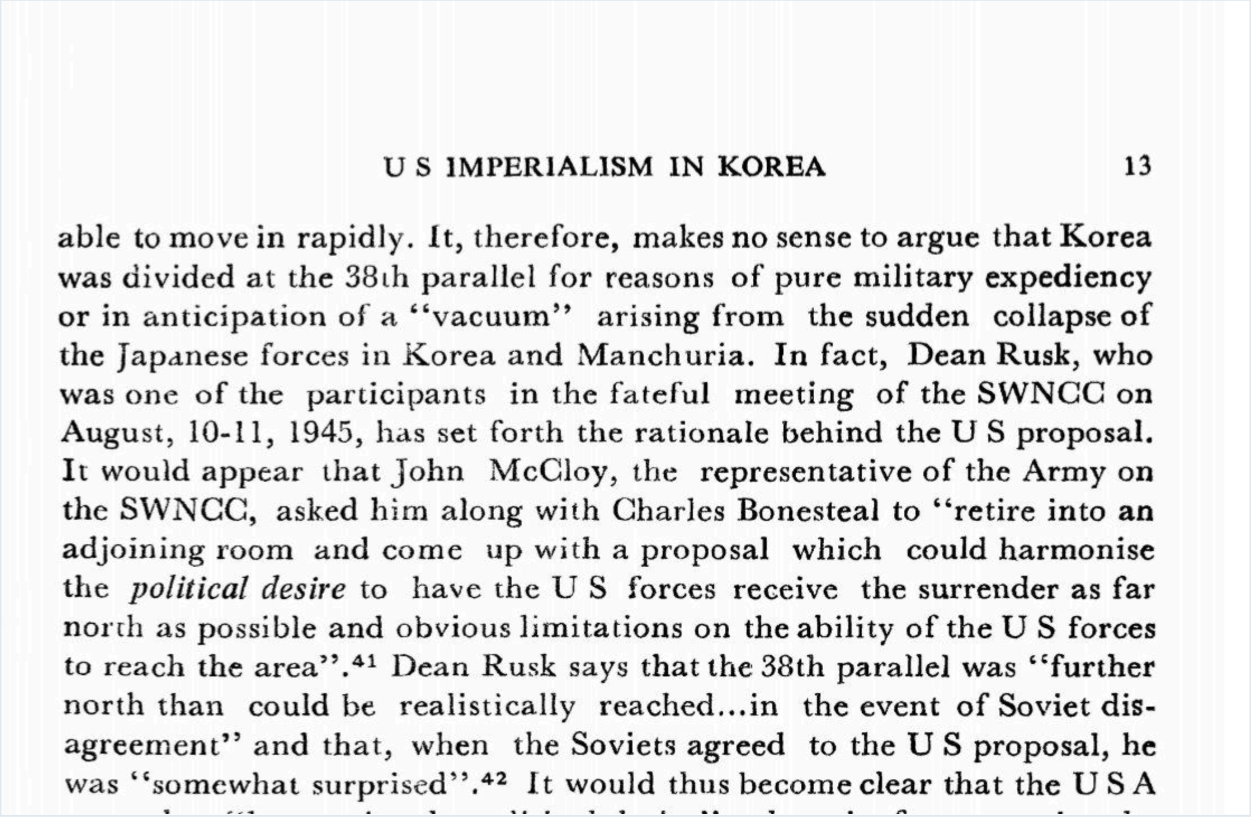
Some Americans and Europeans who are not acquainted with the Koreans' historical background, question —"can they govern themselve"? Koreans are of (*sic*) an old nation. When the ancestors of northern Europe were wandering in the forests clad in skins and practising rites, Koreans had government of their own and attained a high degree of civilization.[27]

And let's not forget the tactical reasons why the US proposed division at the 38th parallel — command was surprised the Soviets accepted that offer, and for good reason. The parallel was farther north than they could reach in the event of Soviet disagreement.



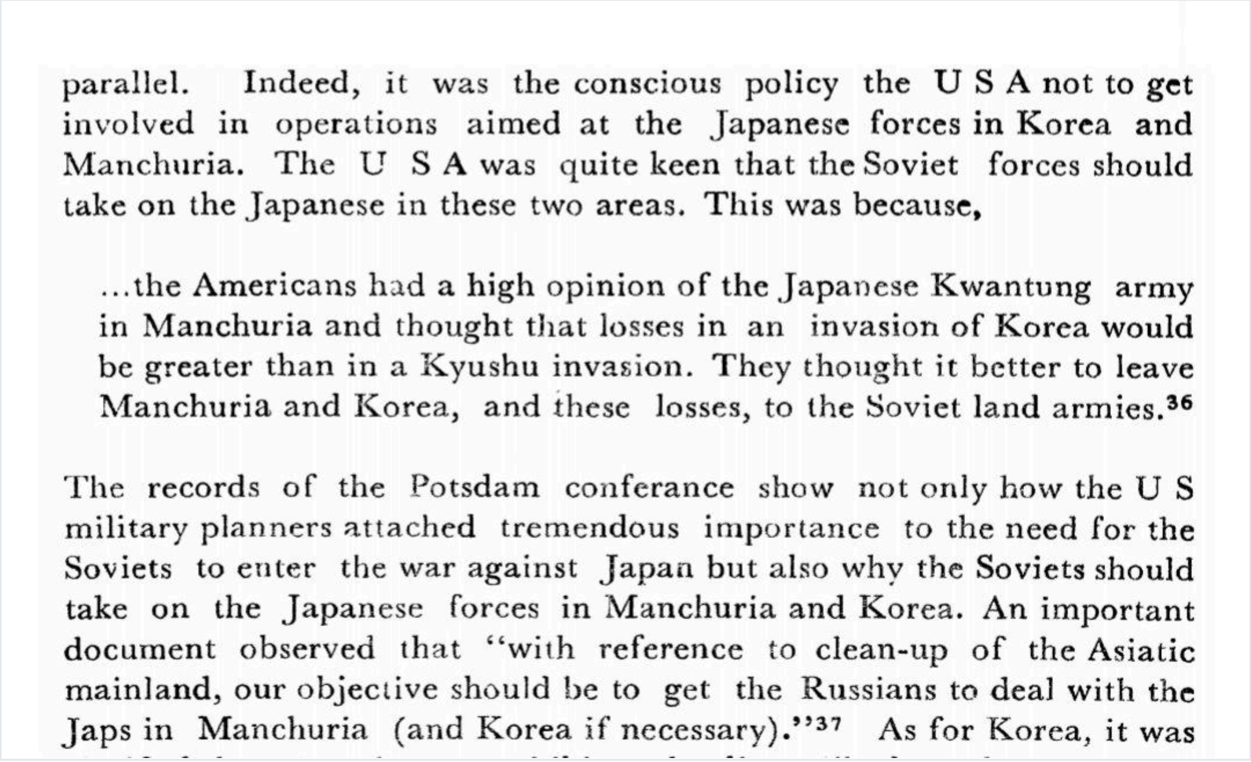
August 15, 1945 and subsequently communicated it to the British and Soviet governments.

Two points need to be stressed regarding the rationale behind the American moves in suggesting the 38th parallel as the dividing line for the creation of two zones. It is wrong to relate the division at the 38th parallel *only* to the acceptance of Japanese surrender. If the purpose was only the acceptance of surrender by the Japanese forces, the U S A could simply have asked the Soviet Union to carry out the task and complete the formalities throughout the peninsula. After all the Soviet Red Army had moved into the peninsula by the second week of August 1945 after successfully and swiftly engaging the much vaunted Kwantung Army in Manchuria. The U S A had wanted the Soviet Red Army to take on the Japanese forces in Manchuria and Korea for fear of heavy casualties and for logistic reasons. The Soviet Red Army had received the support of the contingents of the guerrilla forces belonging to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army and the Korean people. Furthermore, the U S forces were nowhere near the peninsula to be



able to move in rapidly. It, therefore, makes no sense to argue that Korea was divided at the 38th parallel for reasons of pure military expediency or in anticipation of a ''vacuum'' arising from the sudden collapse of the Japanese forces in Korea and Manchuria. In fact, Dean Rusk, who was one of the participants in the fateful meeting of the SWNCC on August, 10-11, 1945, has set forth the rationale behind the U S proposal. It would appear that John McCloy, the representative of the Army on the SWNCC, asked him along with Charles Bonesteal to ''retire into an adjoining room and come up with a proposal which could harmonise the *political desire* to have the U S forces receive the surrender as far north as possible and obvious limitations on the ability of the U S forces to reach the area''.[41] Dean Rusk says that the 38th parallel was ''further north than could be realistically reached...in the event of Soviet disagreement'' and that, when the Soviets agreed to the U S proposal, he was ''somewhat surprised''.[42] It would thus become clear that the U S A

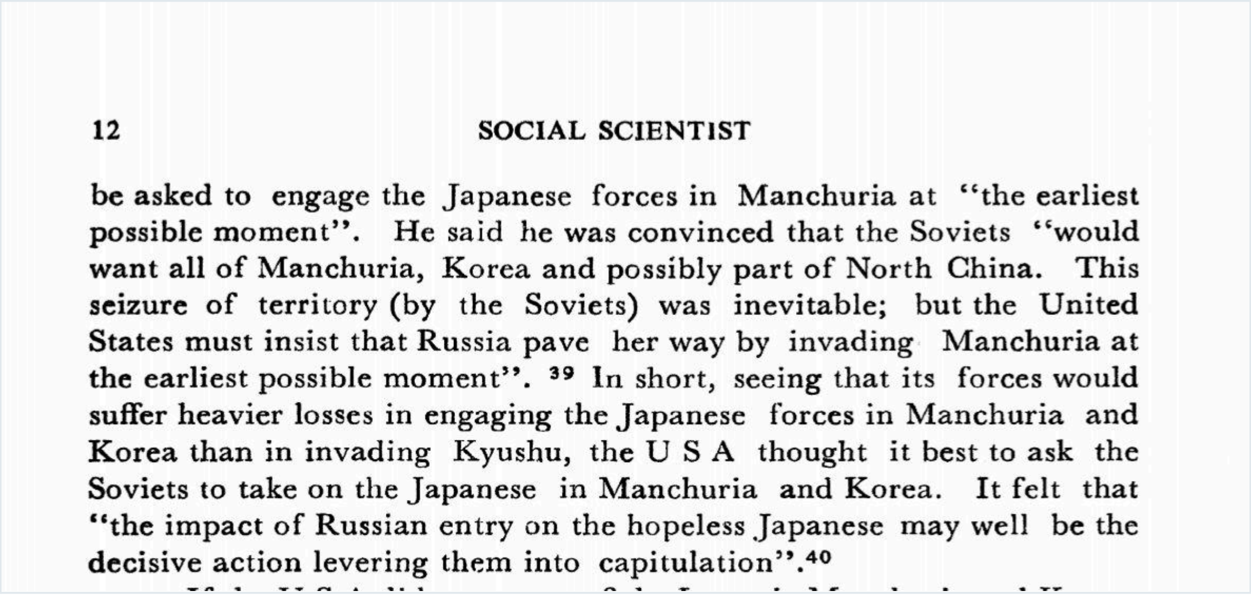
The US wanted the Soviets to exhaust themselves as much as possible, and throw bodies at the better-trained Japanese armies in the north. Great way to treat an ally.



parallel. Indeed, it was the conscious policy the U S A not to get involved in operations aimed at the Japanese forces in Korea and Manchuria. The U S A was quite keen that the Soviet forces should take on the Japanese in these two areas. This was because,

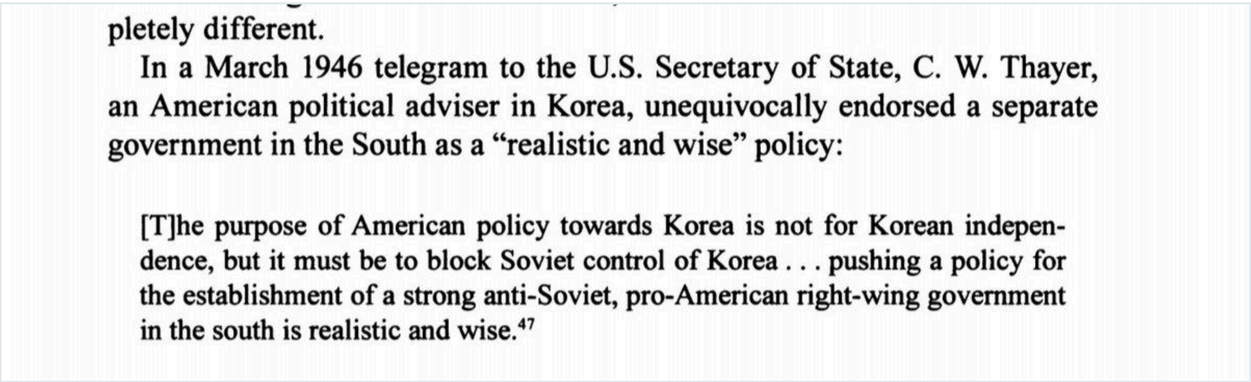
> ...the Americans had a high opinion of the Japanese Kwantung army in Manchuria and thought that losses in an invasion of Korea would be greater than in a Kyushu invasion. They thought it better to leave Manchuria and Korea, and these losses, to the Soviet land armies.[36]

The records of the Potsdam conferance show not only how the U S military planners attached tremendous importance to the need for the Soviets to enter the war against Japan but also why the Soviets should take on the Japanese forces in Manchuria and Korea. An important document observed that "with reference to clean-up of the Asiatic mainland, our objective should be to get the Russians to deal with the Japs in Manchuria (and Korea if necessary)."[37] As for Korea, it was



be asked to engage the Japanese forces in Manchuria at "the earliest possible moment". He said he was convinced that the Soviets "would want all of Manchuria, Korea and possibly part of North China. This seizure of territory (by the Soviets) was inevitable; but the United States must insist that Russia pave her way by invading Manchuria at the earliest possible moment". [39] In short, seeing that its forces would suffer heavier losses in engaging the Japanese forces in Manchuria and Korea than in invading Kyushu, the U S A thought it best to ask the Soviets to take on the Japanese in Manchuria and Korea. It felt that "the impact of Russian entry on the hopeless Japanese may well be the decisive action levering them into capitulation".[40]

It's useful to examine the US' motives for trusteeship, as well — only fair, if we're to be skeptical of Soviet motives. Hard to be plainer than this telegram!

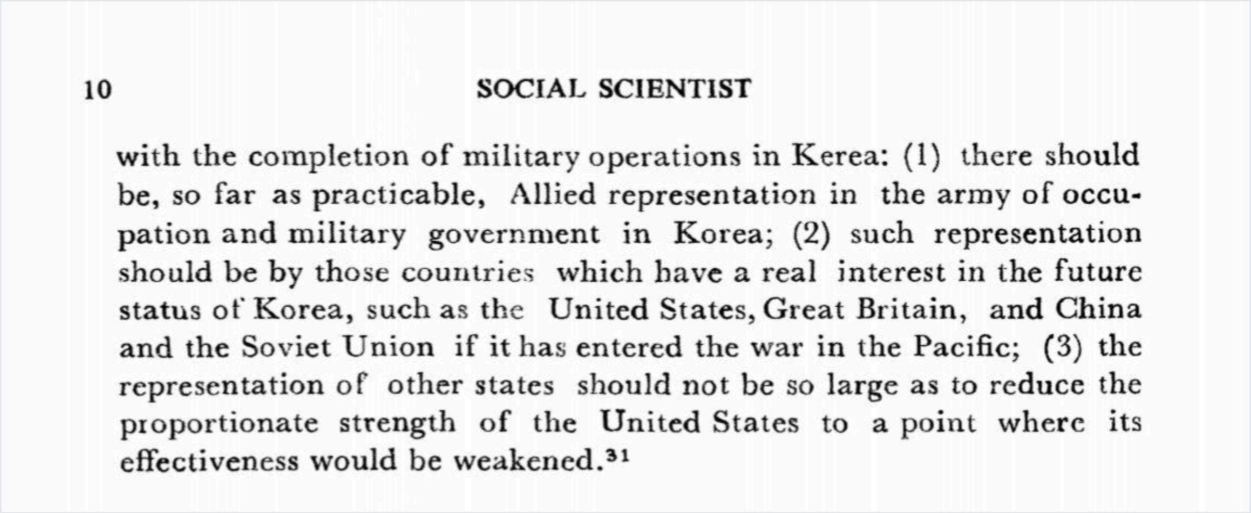


pletely different.

In a March 1946 telegram to the U.S. Secretary of State, C. W. Thayer, an American political adviser in Korea, unequivocally endorsed a separate government in the South as a "realistic and wise" policy:

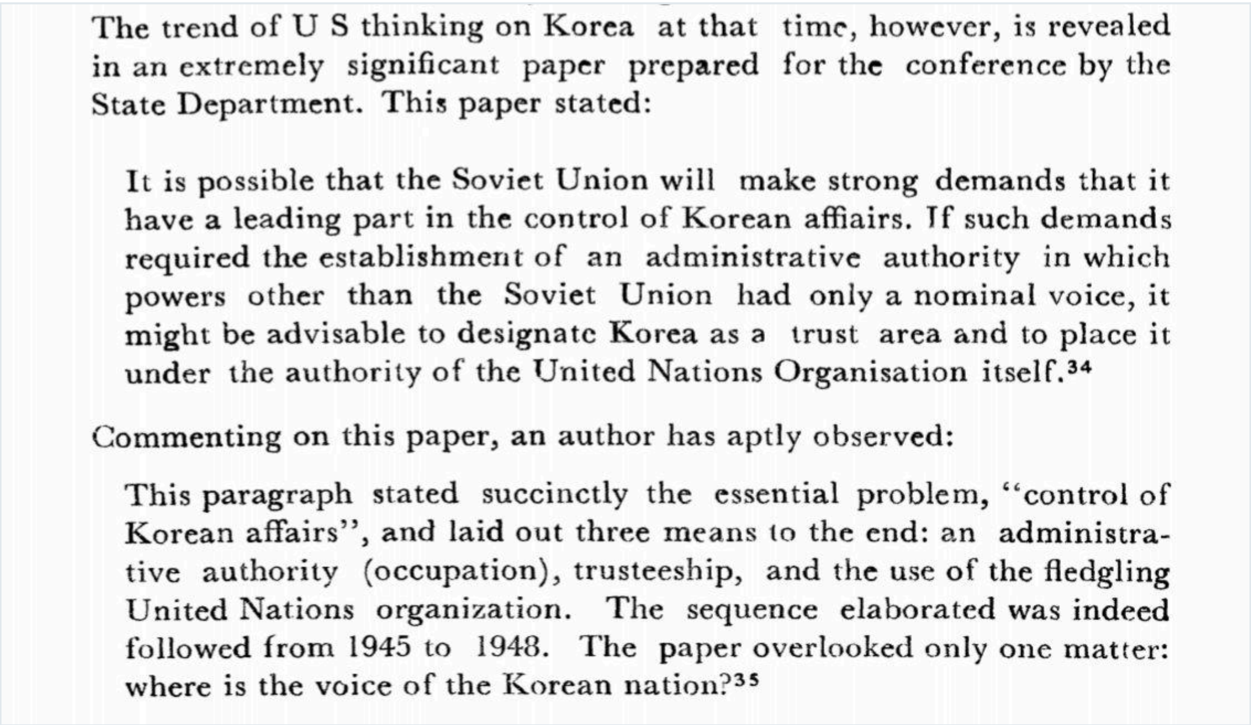
> [T]he purpose of American policy towards Korea is not for Korean independence, but it must be to block Soviet control of Korea . . . pushing a policy for the establishment of a strong anti-Soviet, pro-American right-wing government in the south is realistic and wise.[47]

International alliances were favored only so long as they did not dilute the influence of the United States.



with the completion of military operations in Kerea: (1) there should be, so far as practicable, Allied representation in the army of occupation and military government in Korea; (2) such representation should be by those countries which have a real interest in the future status of Korea, such as the United States, Great Britain, and China and the Soviet Union if it has entered the war in the Pacific; (3) the representation of other states should not be so large as to reduce the proportionate strength of the United States to a point where its effectiveness would be weakened.[31]

And the UN was seen only as a useful counterweight to any Soviet attempts at a leading role. Hence, trusteeship.



The trend of U S thinking on Korea at that time, however, is revealed in an extremely significant paper prepared for the conference by the State Department. This paper stated:

> It is possible that the Soviet Union will make strong demands that it have a leading part in the control of Korean affiairs. If such demands required the establishment of an administrative authority in which powers other than the Soviet Union had only a nominal voice, it might be advisable to designate Korea as a trust area and to place it under the authority of the United Nations Organisation itself.[34]

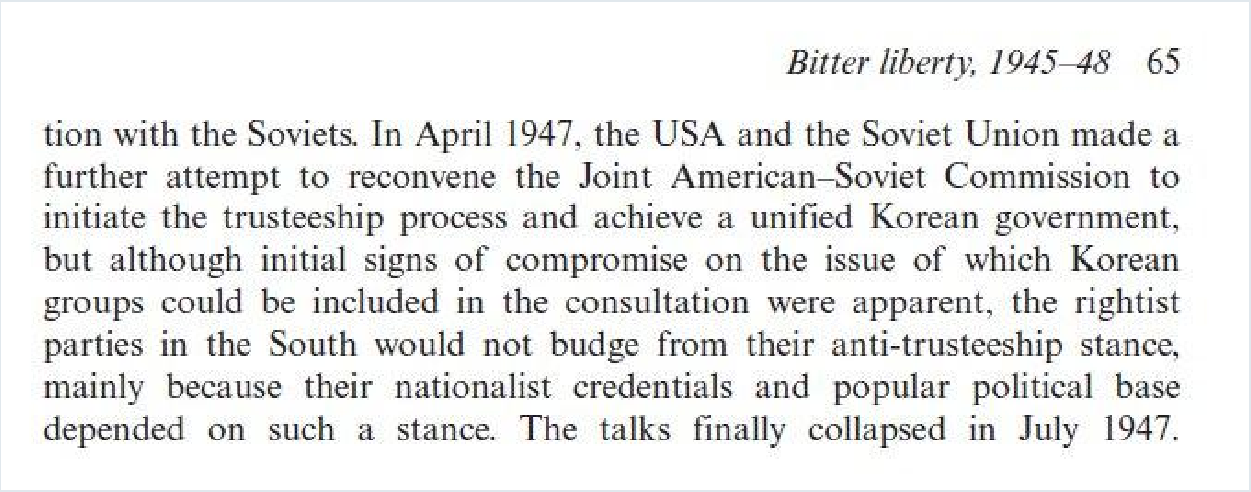
Commenting on this paper, an author has aptly observed:

> This paragraph stated succinctly the essential problem, ''control of Korean affairs'', and laid out three means to the end: an administrative authority (occupation), trusteeship, and the use of the fledgling United Nations organization. The sequence elaborated was indeed followed from 1945 to 1948. The paper overlooked only one matter: where is the voice of the Korean nation?[35]

The trusteeship proposals were met with fierce opposition in the south. Hard to blame them — they'd just had the government they were trying to build outlawed. A joint commission attempted to reconvene and solve the issue, to no success.

In April 1947 Secretary of State Marshall and Foreign Minister Molotov exchanged views on the possibility of resuming the work of the Joint Commission. Some concessions were made on each side, and the Commission reconvened on May 22, to the accompaniment of renewed demonstrations by hostile South Koreans. In August, the Commission having again reached a deadlock, Acting Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett proposed a four-power conference to consider a new plan, under which the United Nations would supervise elections for a provisional legislature and government. When the Soviet Union rejected this, the United States announced that it would lay the whole problem before the General Assembly of the United Nations. Russia then proposed that all foreign troops be withdrawn from Korea by January 1, 1948, after which the Koreans could conduct their own elections. The United States, however, proceeded with its plan to refer the question to the UN.

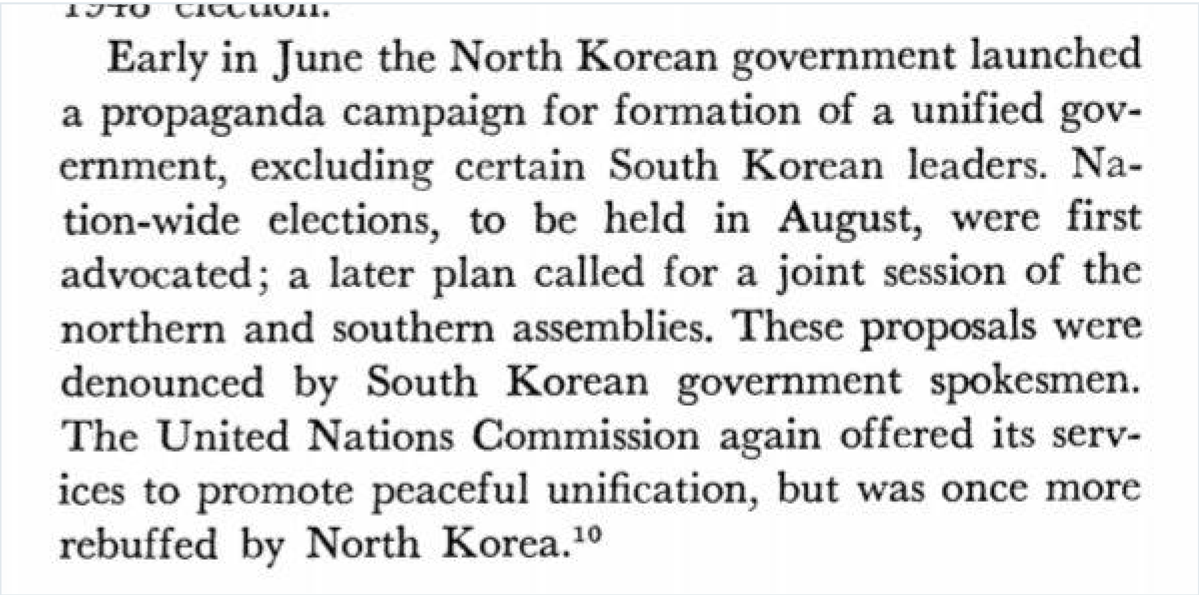
On November 14, 1947 the UN General Assembly



Bitter liberty, 1945–48 65

tion with the Soviets. In April 1947, the USA and the Soviet Union made a further attempt to reconvene the Joint American–Soviet Commission to initiate the trusteeship process and achieve a unified Korean government, but although initial signs of compromise on the issue of which Korean groups could be included in the consultation were apparent, the rightist parties in the South would not budge from their anti-trusteeship stance, mainly because their nationalist credentials and popular political base depended on such a stance. The talks finally collapsed in July 1947.

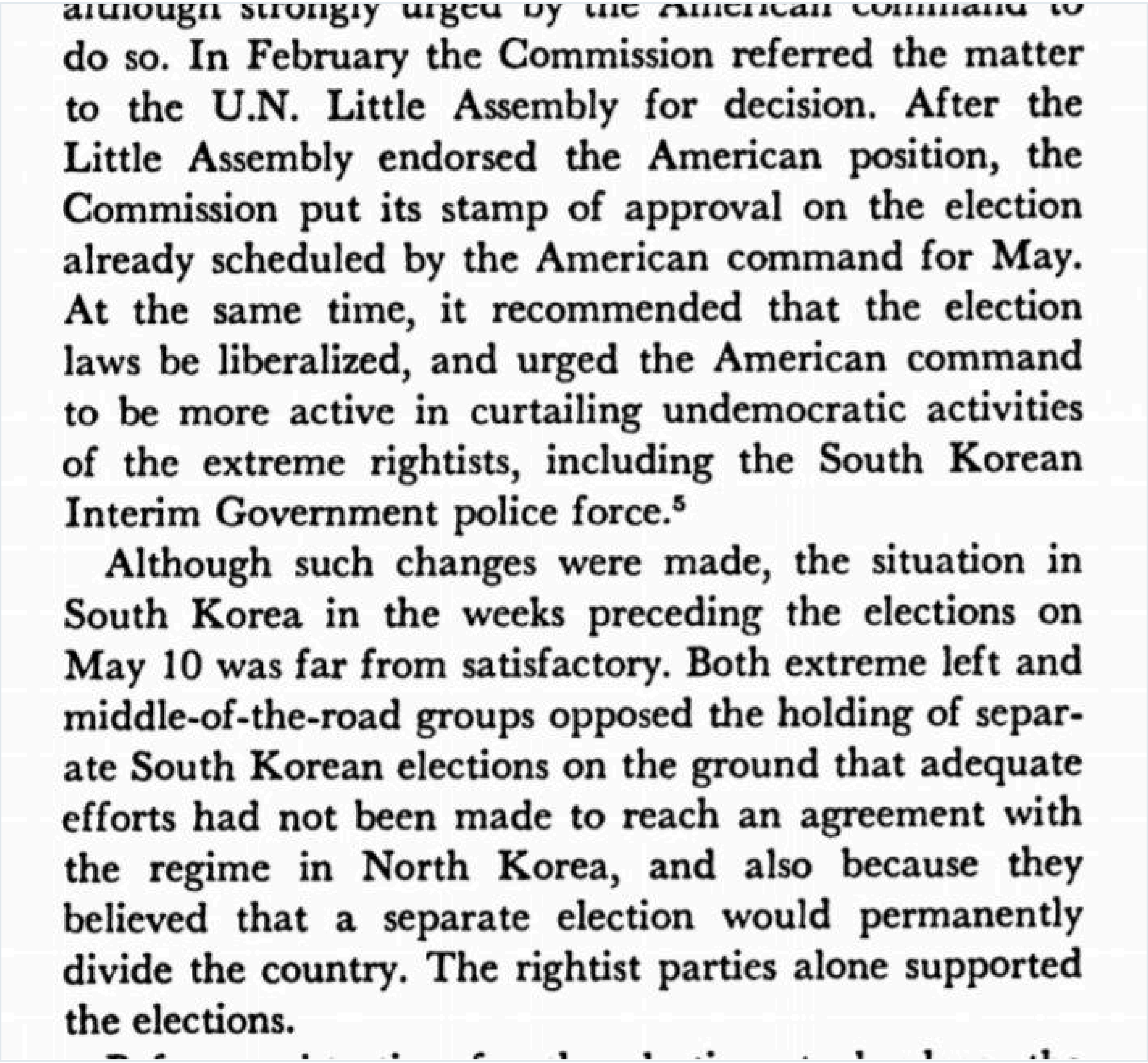
You can see why above. The US continued to stick to its four-power structure, a clear attempt to box out the Soviets. The south rejected counter-proposals from the north. And on and on it went.



1948 election.

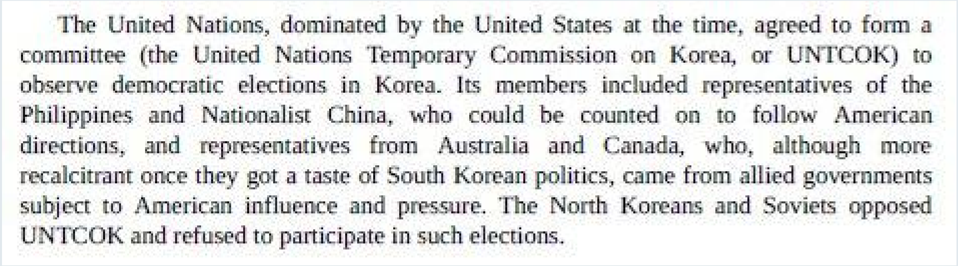
Early in June the North Korean government launched a propaganda campaign for formation of a unified government, excluding certain South Korean leaders. Nation-wide elections, to be held in August, were first advocated; a later plan called for a joint session of the northern and southern assemblies. These proposals were denounced by South Korean government spokesmen. The United Nations Commission again offered its services to promote peaceful unification, but was once more rebuffed by North Korea.[10]

Finally, the UN approved the procedure the US and south wanted.



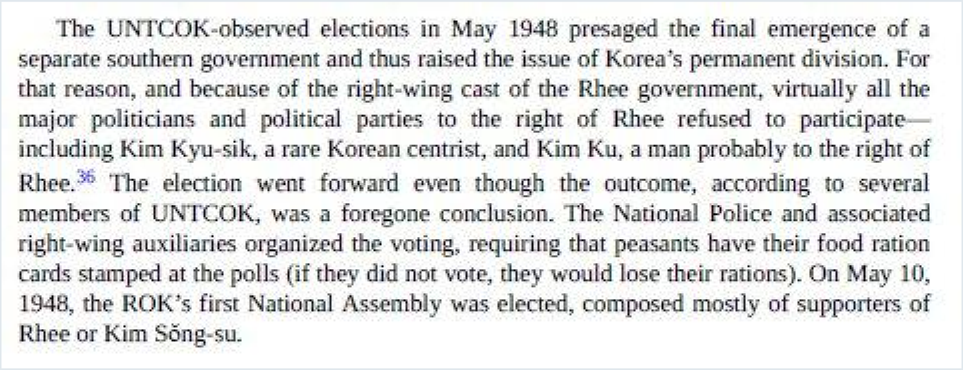
although strongly urged by the American command to do so. In February the Commission referred the matter to the U.N. Little Assembly for decision. After the Little Assembly endorsed the American position, the Commission put its stamp of approval on the election already scheduled by the American command for May. At the same time, it recommended that the election laws be liberalized, and urged the American command to be more active in curtailing undemocratic activities of the extreme rightists, including the South Korean Interim Government police force.[5]

Although such changes were made, the situation in South Korea in the weeks preceding the elections on May 10 was far from satisfactory. Both extreme left and middle-of-the-road groups opposed the holding of separate South Korean elections on the ground that adequate efforts had not been made to reach an agreement with the regime in North Korea, and also because they believed that a separate election would permanently divide the country. The rightist parties alone supported the elections.



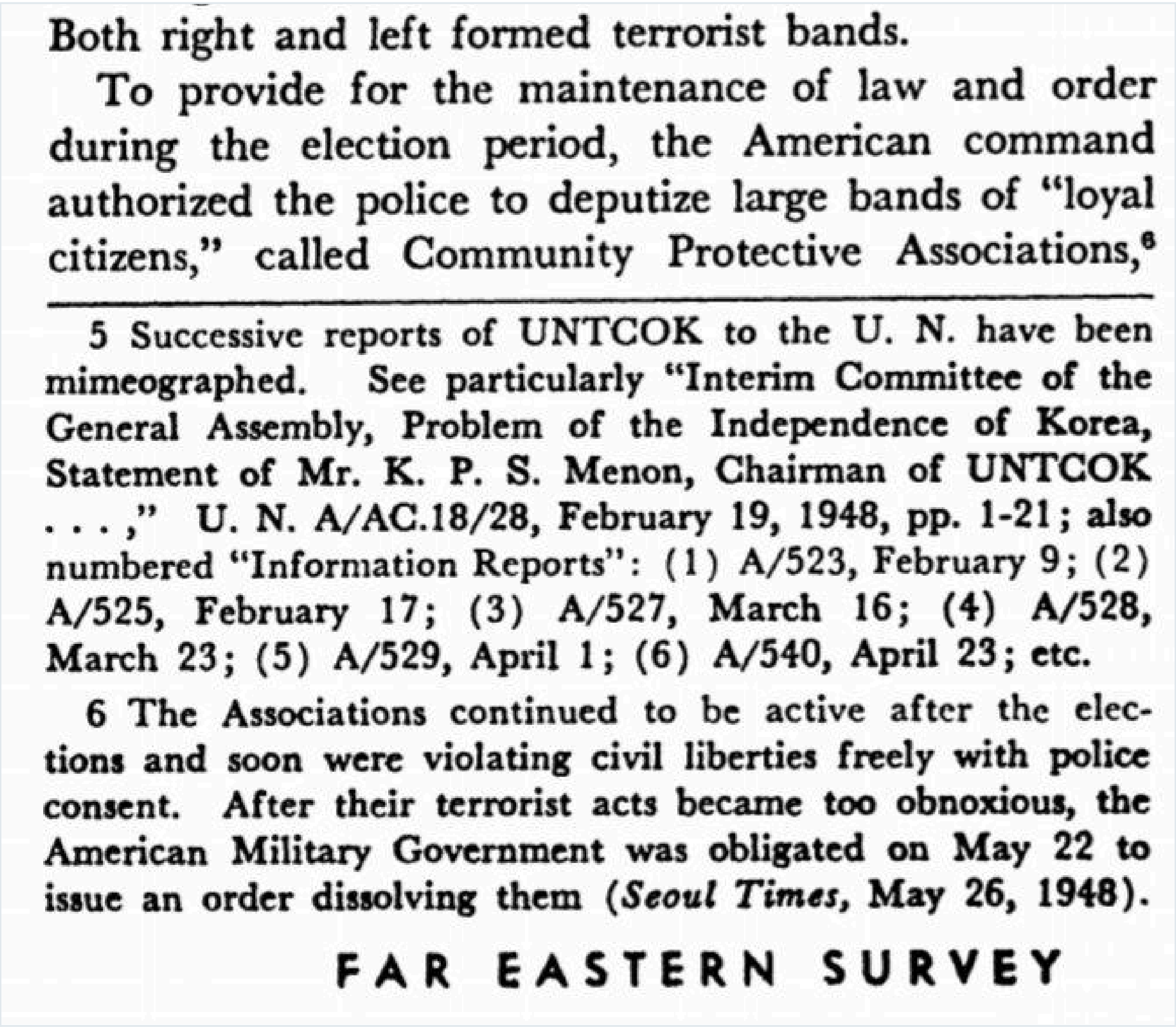
The United Nations, dominated by the United States at the time, agreed to form a committee (the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea, or UNTCOK) to observe democratic elections in Korea. Its members included representatives of the Philippines and Nationalist China, who could be counted on to follow American directions, and representatives from Australia and Canada, who, although more recalcitrant once they got a taste of South Korean politics, came from allied governments subject to American influence and pressure. The North Koreans and Soviets opposed UNTCOK and refused to participate in such elections.

What followed was farce. Practically everyone besides Syngman Rhee, the Americans' choice and an ardent anti-communist, boycotted.



The UNTCOK-observed elections in May 1948 presaged the final emergence of a separate southern government and thus raised the issue of Korea's permanent division. For that reason, and because of the right-wing cast of the Rhee government, virtually all the major politicians and political parties to the right of Rhee refused to participate—including Kim Kyu-sik, a rare Korean centrist, and Kim Ku, a man probably to the right of Rhee.[36] The election went forward even though the outcome, according to several members of UNTCOK, was a foregone conclusion. The National Police and associated right-wing auxiliaries organized the voting, requiring that peasants have their food ration cards stamped at the polls (if they did not vote, they would lose their rations). On May 10, 1948, the ROK's first National Assembly was elected, composed mostly of supporters of Rhee or Kim Sŏng-su.

The US authorized death squads to enforce "order" through violence and terror. After the elections, the military government finally balked at the bloodshed and disbanded the gangs.



Both right and left formed terrorist bands.

To provide for the maintenance of law and order during the election period, the American command authorized the police to deputize large bands of "loyal citizens," called Community Protective Associations,[6]

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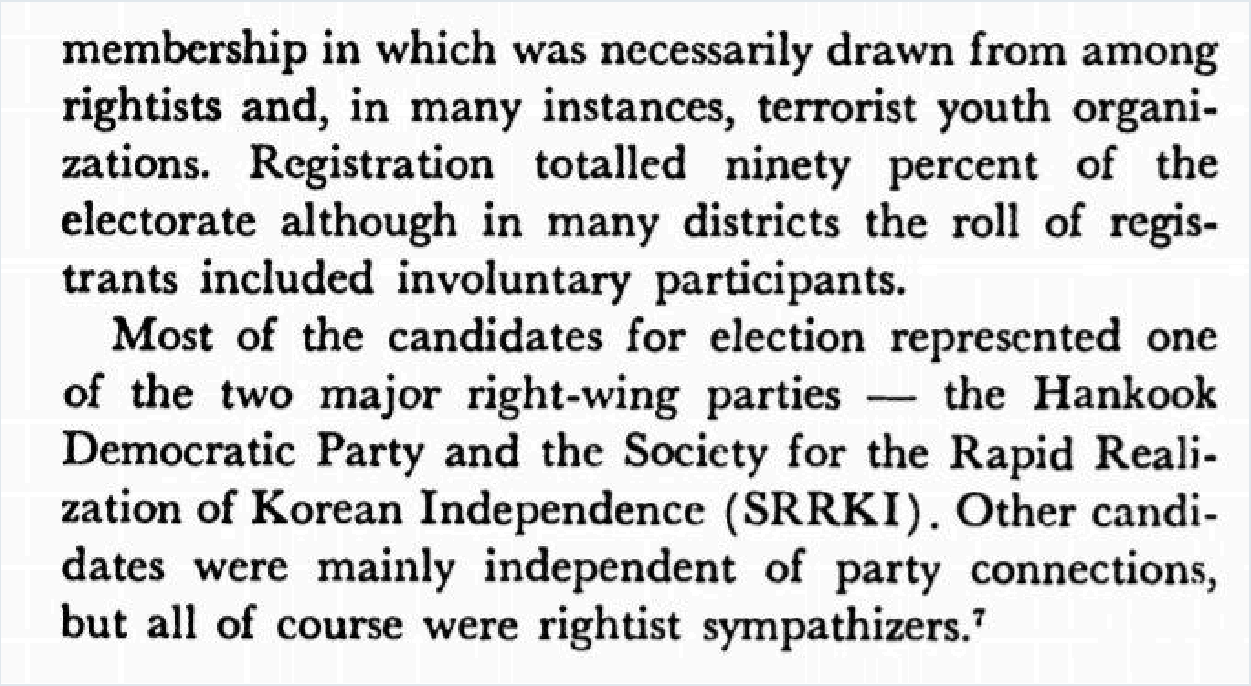
5 Successive reports of UNTCOK to the U. N. have been mimeographed. See particularly "Interim Committee of the General Assembly, Problem of the Independence of Korea, Statement of Mr. K. P. S. Menon, Chairman of UNTCOK . . . ," U. N. A/AC.18/28, February 19, 1948, pp. 1-21; also numbered "Information Reports": (1) A/523, February 9; (2) A/525, February 17; (3) A/527, March 16; (4) A/528, March 23; (5) A/529, April 1; (6) A/540, April 23; etc.

6 The Associations continued to be active after the elections and soon were violating civil liberties freely with police consent. After their terrorist acts became too obnoxious, the American Military Government was obligated on May 22 to issue an order dissolving them (*Seoul Times*, May 26, 1948).

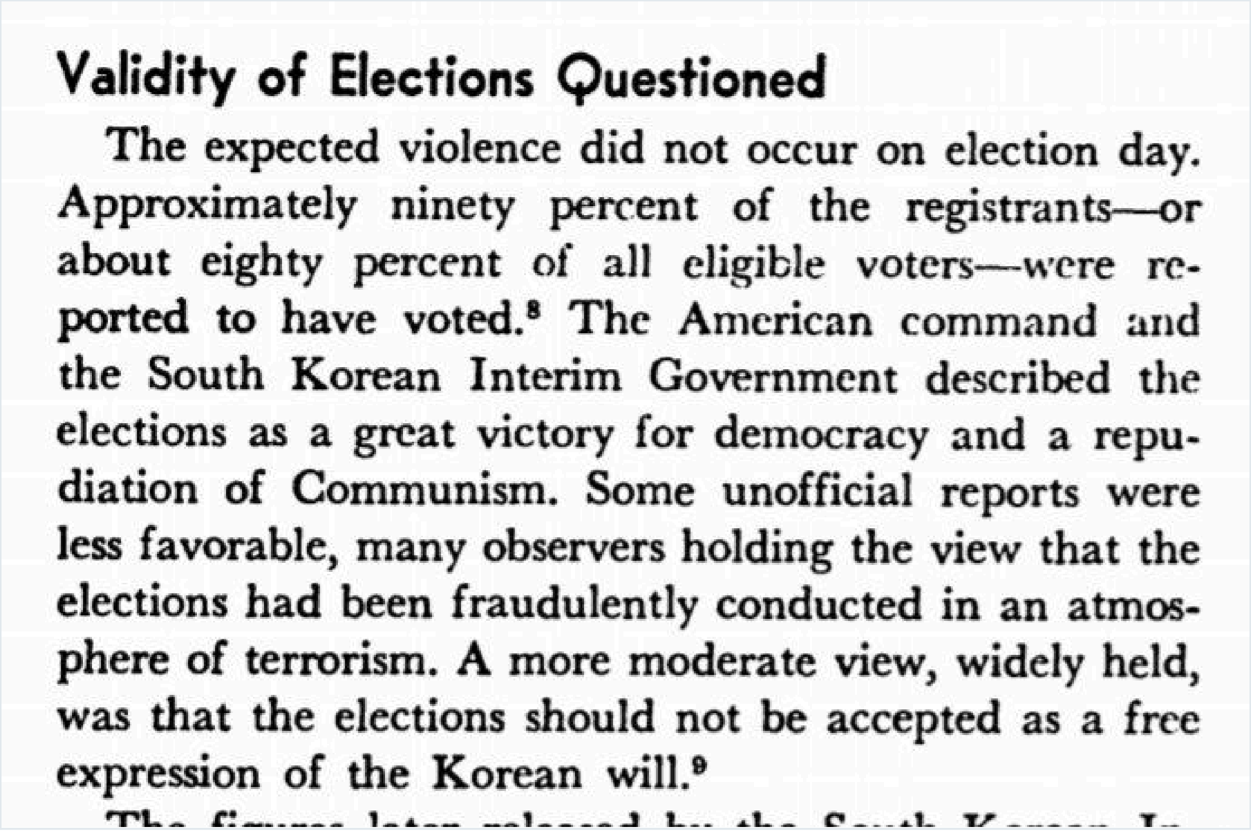
FAR EASTERN SURVEY



membership in which was necessarily drawn from among rightists and, in many instances, terrorist youth organizations. Registration totalled ninety percent of the electorate although in many districts the roll of registrants included involuntary participants.

Most of the candidates for election represented one of the two major right-wing parties — the Hankook Democratic Party and the Society for the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence (SRRKI). Other candidates were mainly independent of party connections, but all of course were rightist sympathizers.[7]

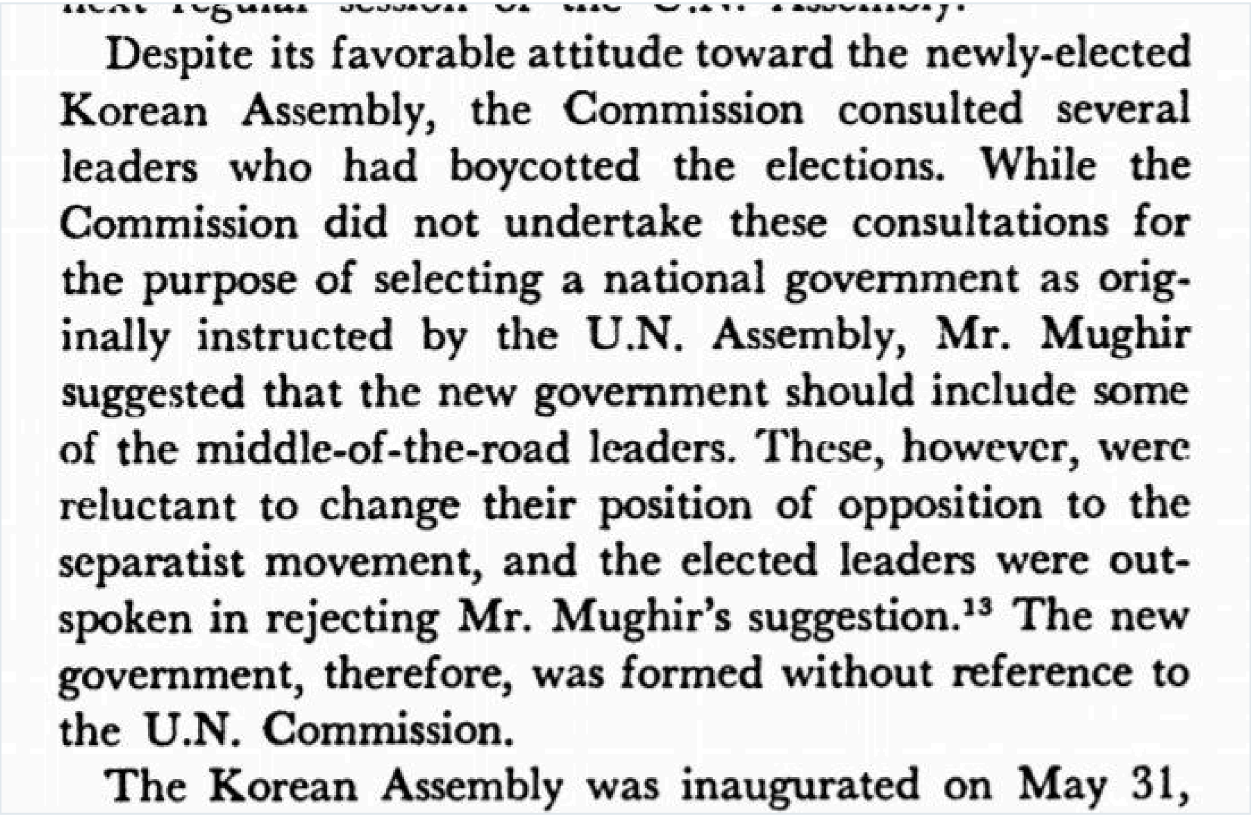
Reaction to the vote was mixed, at best. Only staunch John Birchers were without doubt as to the legitimacy of the process. The UN itself was rebuffed by the new right-wing assembly.



Validity of Elections Questioned

The expected violence did not occur on election day. Approximately ninety percent of the registrants—or about eighty percent of all eligible voters—were reported to have voted.[8] The American command and the South Korean Interim Government described the elections as a great victory for democracy and a repudiation of Communism. Some unofficial reports were less favorable, many observers holding the view that the elections had been fraudulently conducted in an atmosphere of terrorism. A more moderate view, widely held, was that the elections should not be accepted as a free expression of the Korean will.[9]

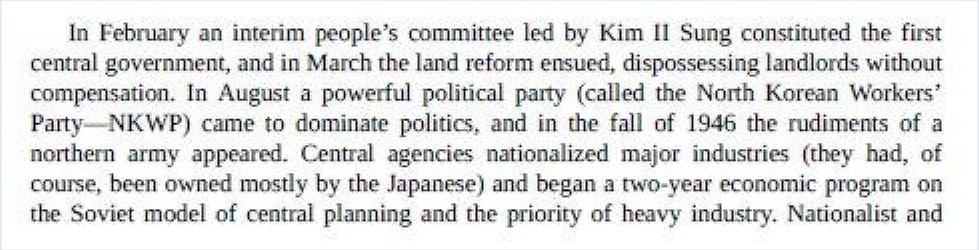
The figures later released by the South Korean In-



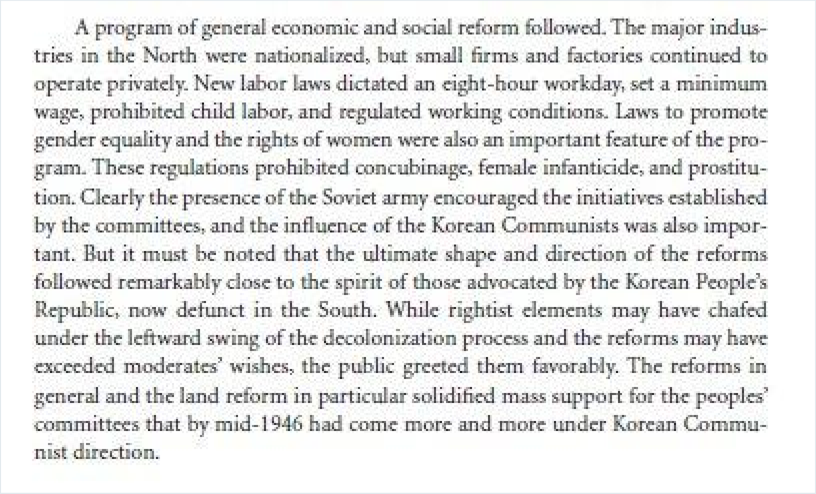
Despite its favorable attitude toward the newly-elected Korean Assembly, the Commission consulted several leaders who had boycotted the elections. While the Commission did not undertake these consultations for the purpose of selecting a national government as originally instructed by the U.N. Assembly, Mr. Mughir suggested that the new government should include some of the middle-of-the-road leaders. These, however, were reluctant to change their position of opposition to the separatist movement, and the elected leaders were outspoken in rejecting Mr. Mughir's suggestion.[13] The new government, therefore, was formed without reference to the U.N. Commission.

The Korean Assembly was inaugurated on May 31,

After these elections, it was a simple fact the division of the peninsula wouldn't be resolved any time soon. As such, it was time for each party to get to work governing each half. The north administered in the spirit of the former People's Republic. Ambitious programs of nationalization and reform gave greater latitude to the working class.

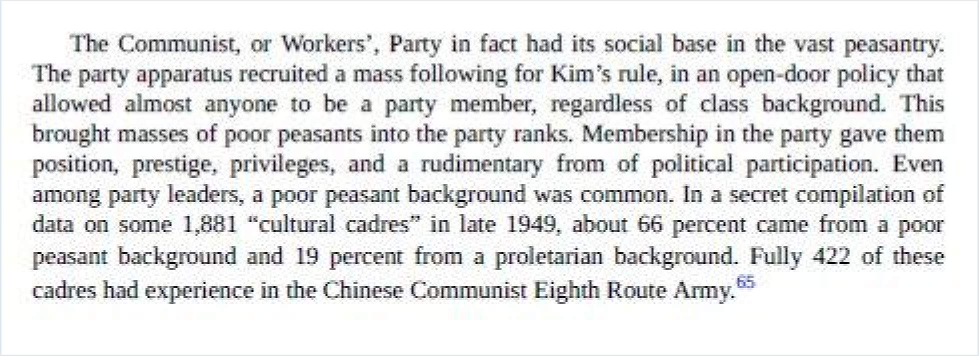


In February an interim people's committee led by Kim Il Sung constituted the first central government, and in March the land reform ensued, dispossessing landlords without compensation. In August a powerful political party (called the North Korean Workers' Party—NKWP) came to dominate politics, and in the fall of 1946 the rudiments of a northern army appeared. Central agencies nationalized major industries (they had, of course, been owned mostly by the Japanese) and began a two-year economic program on the Soviet model of central planning and the priority of heavy industry. Nationalist and



A program of general economic and social reform followed. The major industries in the North were nationalized, but small firms and factories continued to operate privately. New labor laws dictated an eight-hour workday, set a minimum wage, prohibited child labor, and regulated working conditions. Laws to promote gender equality and the rights of women were also an important feature of the program. These regulations prohibited concubinage, female infanticide, and prostitution. Clearly the presence of the Soviet army encouraged the initiatives established by the committees, and the influence of the Korean Communists was also important. But it must be noted that the ultimate shape and direction of the reforms followed remarkably close to the spirit of those advocated by the Korean People's Republic, now defunct in the South. While rightist elements may have chafed under the leftward swing of the decolonization process and the reforms may have exceeded moderates' wishes, the public greeted them favorably. The reforms in general and the land reform in particular solidified mass support for the peoples' committees that by mid-1946 had come more and more under Korean Communist direction.

In the north, the structure of the ruling party itself reflected who held power — the peasantry and proletariat.



The Communist, or Workers', Party in fact had its social base in the vast peasantry. The party apparatus recruited a mass following for Kim's rule, in an open-door policy that allowed almost anyone to be a party member, regardless of class background. This brought masses of poor peasants into the party ranks. Membership in the party gave them position, prestige, privileges, and a rudimentary from of political participation. Even among party leaders, a poor peasant background was common. In a secret compilation of data on some 1,881 "cultural cadres" in late 1949, about 66 percent came from a poor peasant background and 19 percent from a proletarian background. Fully 422 of these cadres had experience in the Chinese Communist Eighth Route Army.[65]

On the other hand, let's check out the folks governing in the south. Neophytes and noblemen.

Other Cabinet Appointments

Foreign Secretary Chang Taiksang was educated in England and has been Police Chief of Seoul under the South Korean Interim Government. A strong, rightist, Hankook party leader, he is efficient, eccentric, and often the object of bitter criticism from liberal and left-wing elements because of the brutal and terroristic methods of his police force.

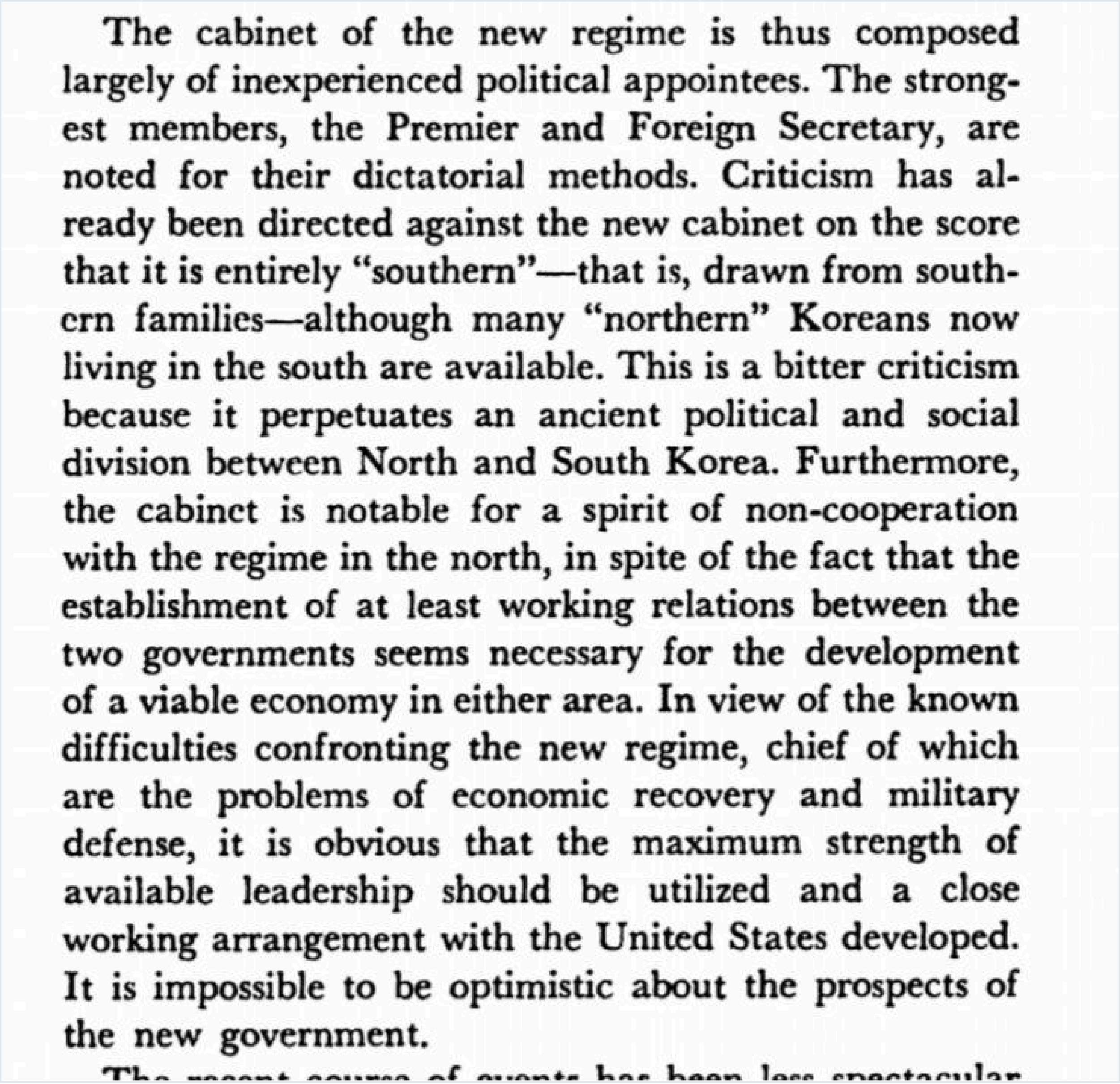
Commerce Secretary Louise Yim, American-educated organizer and leader of the Woman's Democratic Party, "represented" the Korean Democratic Assembly (Dr. Rhee's unofficial body) at the United Nations Assembly in 1947-48. She was credited in Korea with having obtained U.N. intervention in the Korean question, and appears to have been rewarded by the cabinet appointment. Her previous experience has been entirely in social work and education.

Secretary of Finance Kim Duyun, also American-educated (Ph.D. in Economics, American University, Washington, D. C.), belongs to the old plutocracy, is a member of the Hankook Party, and was previously a member of the Interim Legislative Assembly. He is without previous practical experience in finance.

Secretary of Transportation Min Hisik is the only carry-over without change of position from the South Korean Interim Government. He belongs to a once-noble family and is reputed to favor an anti-union labor policy and police-state methods of control.

Secretary of Justice Lee In, Chief Prosecutor under the South Korean Interim Government, is a Japanese-trained lawyer who practiced in Korea under the Japanese but who, nevertheless, is known for his patriotism, having served a jail sentence for his connection with the Korean Language Society.

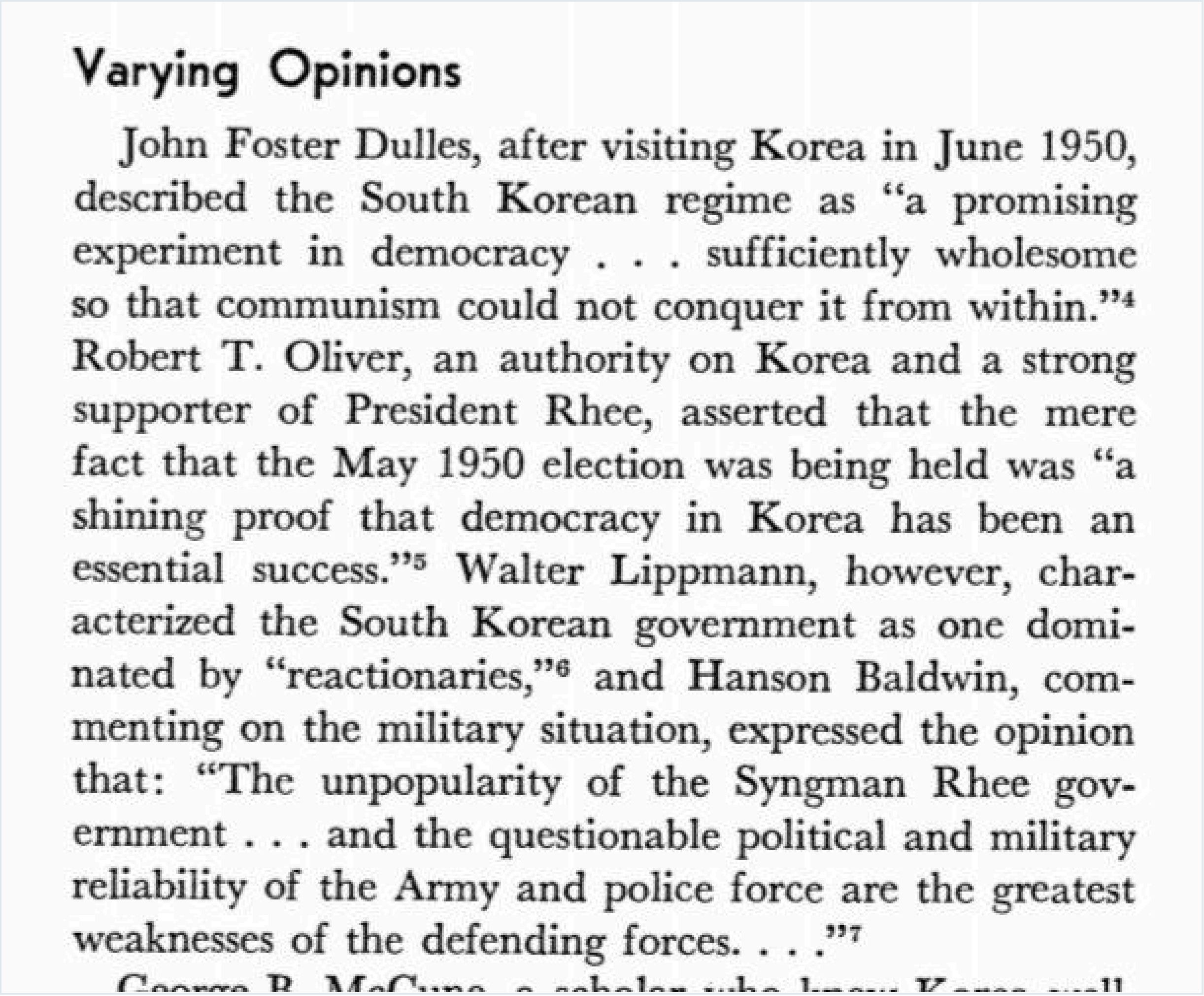
Truly the stuff of dreams.



The cabinet of the new regime is thus composed largely of inexperienced political appointees. The strongest members, the Premier and Foreign Secretary, are noted for their dictatorial methods. Criticism has already been directed against the new cabinet on the score that it is entirely "southern"—that is, drawn from southern families—although many "northern" Koreans now living in the south are available. This is a bitter criticism because it perpetuates an ancient political and social division between North and South Korea. Furthermore, the cabinet is notable for a spirit of non-cooperation with the regime in the north, in spite of the fact that the establishment of at least working relations between the two governments seems necessary for the development of a viable economy in either area. In view of the known difficulties confronting the new regime, chief of which are the problems of economic recovery and military defense, it is obvious that the maximum strength of available leadership should be utilized and a close working arrangement with the United States developed. It is impossible to be optimistic about the prospects of the new government.

The recent course of events has been less spectacular

Even the ratings from their patron state are mixed.

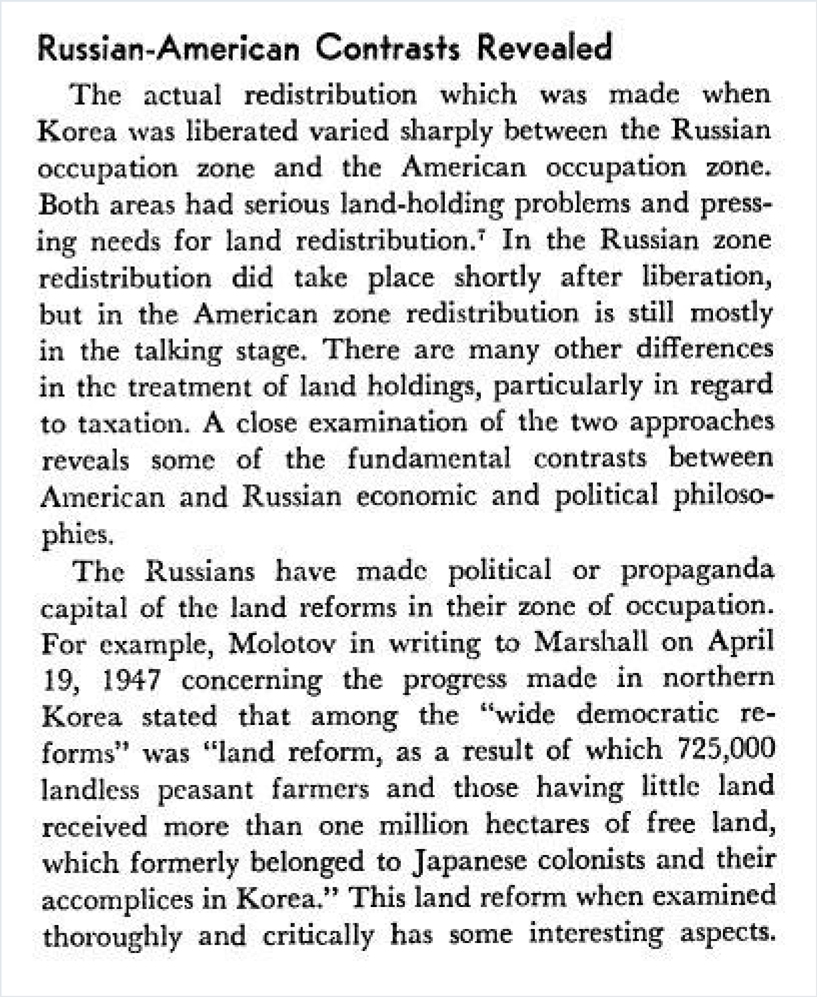


Varying Opinions

John Foster Dulles, after visiting Korea in June 1950, described the South Korean regime as "a promising experiment in democracy . . . sufficiently wholesome so that communism could not conquer it from within."[4] Robert T. Oliver, an authority on Korea and a strong supporter of President Rhee, asserted that the mere fact that the May 1950 election was being held was "a shining proof that democracy in Korea has been an essential success."[5] Walter Lippmann, however, characterized the South Korean government as one dominated by "reactionaries,"[6] and Hanson Baldwin, commenting on the military situation, expressed the opinion that: "The unpopularity of the Syngman Rhee government . . . and the questionable political and military reliability of the Army and police force are the greatest weaknesses of the defending forces. . . ."[7]

George B. McCune, a scholar who knew Korea well

But, OK, let's say this ragtag bunch of misfits with a song in their heart really wants what's best for the south. How should we judge them? Each country's policy on land should make for a good case study. Land reform and redistribution took place almost immediately in the north. In the south, well…you can probably guess by now.

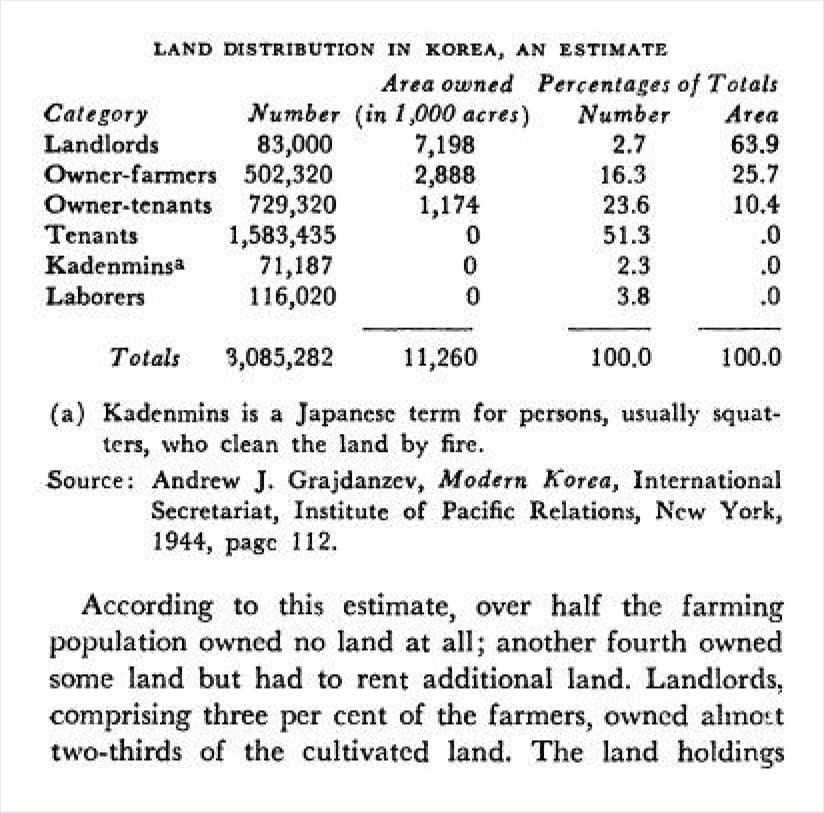


Russian-American Contrasts Revealed

The actual redistribution which was made when Korea was liberated varied sharply between the Russian occupation zone and the American occupation zone. Both areas had serious land-holding problems and pressing needs for land redistribution.[7] In the Russian zone redistribution did take place shortly after liberation, but in the American zone redistribution is still mostly in the talking stage. There are many other differences in the treatment of land holdings, particularly in regard to taxation. A close examination of the two approaches reveals some of the fundamental contrasts between American and Russian economic and political philosophies.

The Russians have made political or propaganda capital of the land reforms in their zone of occupation. For example, Molotov in writing to Marshall on April 19, 1947 concerning the progress made in northern Korea stated that among the "wide democratic reforms" was "land reform, as a result of which 725,000 landless peasant farmers and those having little land received more than one million hectares of free land, which formerly belonged to Japanese colonists and their accomplices in Korea." This land reform when examined thoroughly and critically has some interesting aspects.

This was the situation before independence. Two percent of the population had about two-thirds of all farming land.



LAND DISTRIBUTION IN KOREA, AN ESTIMATE

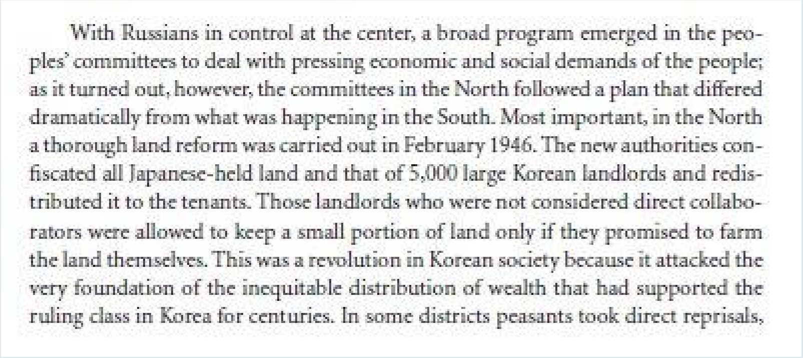
Category	Number	Area owned (in 1,000 acres)	Percentages of Totals	
			Number	*Area*
Landlords	83,000	7,198	2.7	63.9
Owner-farmers	502,320	2,888	16.3	25.7
Owner-tenants	729,320	1,174	23.6	10.4
Tenants	1,583,435	0	51.3	.0
Kadenmins[a]	71,187	0	2.3	.0
Laborers	116,020	0	3.8	.0
Totals	3,085,282	11,260	100.0	100.0

(a) Kadenmins is a Japanese term for persons, usually squatters, who clean the land by fire.

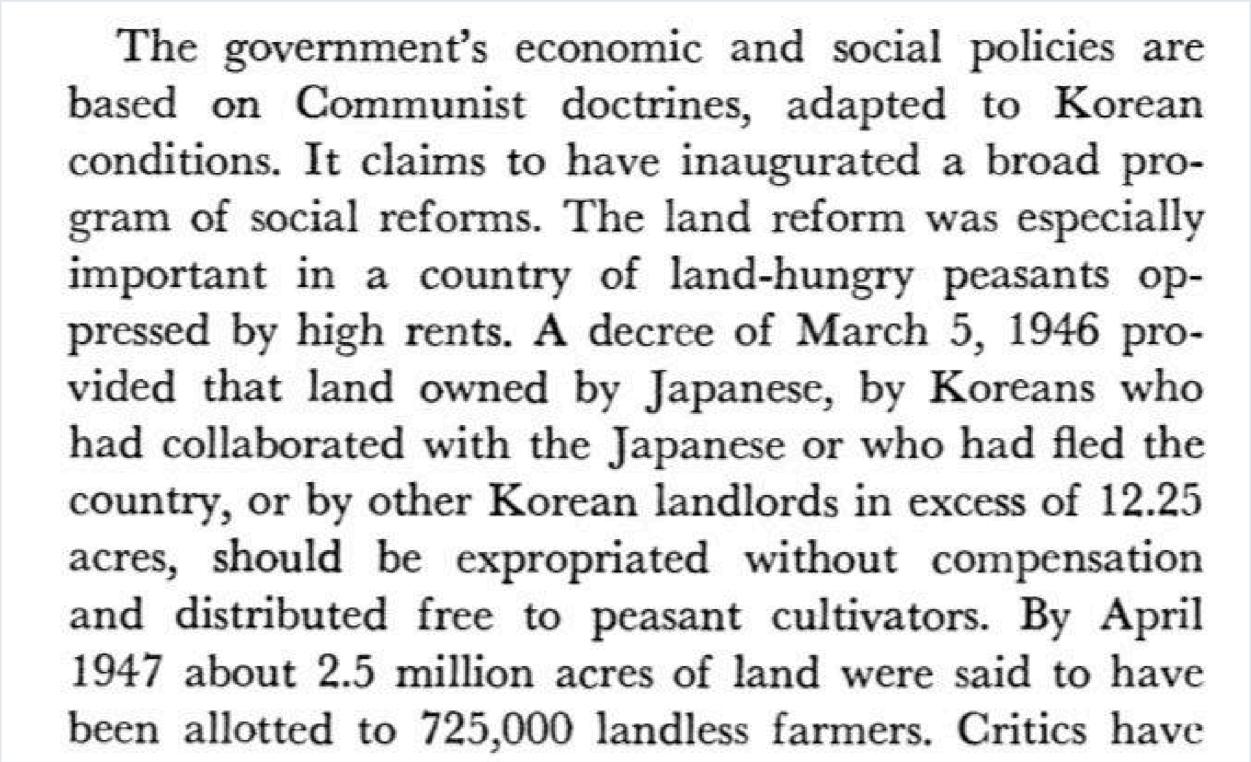
Source: Andrew J. Grajdanzev, *Modern Korea,* International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1944, page 112.

According to this estimate, over half the farming population owned no land at all; another fourth owned some land but had to rent additional land. Landlords, comprising three per cent of the farmers, owned almost two-thirds of the cultivated land. The land holdings

And here's what the north did.



With Russians in control at the center, a broad program emerged in the peoples' committees to deal with pressing economic and social demands of the people; as it turned out, however, the committees in the North followed a plan that differed dramatically from what was happening in the South. Most important, in the North a thorough land reform was carried out in February 1946. The new authorities confiscated all Japanese-held land and that of 5,000 large Korean landlords and redistributed it to the tenants. Those landlords who were not considered direct collaborators were allowed to keep a small portion of land only if they promised to farm the land themselves. This was a revolution in Korean society because it attacked the very foundation of the inequitable distribution of wealth that had supported the ruling class in Korea for centuries. In some districts peasants took direct reprisals,

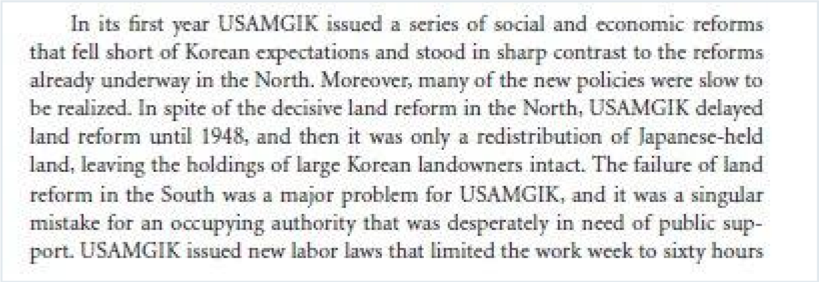


The government's economic and social policies are based on Communist doctrines, adapted to Korean conditions. It claims to have inaugurated a broad program of social reforms. The land reform was especially important in a country of land-hungry peasants oppressed by high rents. A decree of March 5, 1946 provided that land owned by Japanese, by Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese or who had fled the country, or by other Korean landlords in excess of 12.25 acres, should be expropriated without compensation and distributed free to peasant cultivators. By April 1947 about 2.5 million acres of land were said to have been allotted to 725,000 landless farmers. Critics have

Another clear statement on the Soviets' background role. Whether their intention was granting complete autonomy or keeping a light touch, the fact remains: Land reform was a Korean affair. The DPRK's land reform law was signed into law on March 5th 1946, and for a while it offered North Korea a way to produce enough food to feed its people. Those Japanese and Korean landlords who possessed more than 50,000 square meters of land were to have it expropriated and distributed to existing tenant farmers for free, whilst the existing tenant farming system was to be abolished. The basic principles of the law were land expropriation without compensation and land distribution for free to former peasant tenants. However, those owning more than 50,000 square meters of land but without tenant peasants were excluded. In accordance with the provisions of Article 5 of the law, the Committee granted farmers ownership, stating, "All expropriated land is to be distributed to farmers for free." However, post-distribution use of the land was restricted; Article 10 of the law prohibited using land as collateral in lending, the selling of land or subletting to tenants. As the law itself puts it, "The distributed land cannot be given over to tenant farming and/or used as collateral." At the time of the law's enacting, Korea had been liberated from Japanese colonial rule, but around 58 percent of arable land was still owned by a minority of pro-Japanese landlords constituting just four percent of the population. Meanwhile, most North Koreans in 1946 were farmers, 80 percent of all farmers were extremely poor, and they represented a majority of the total North Korean population. Naturally, the new law was very popular. It was, after all, an opportunity for the Communist Party to appeal to the masses. The political situation was especially complex; a country divided between Soviet-occupied North and American-occupied South, political factions coalescing around different parties, and factions emerging within the Party itself. In North Korea, the North Korean Provisional People's Committee and the Communist Party led land reform by organizing 90,697 members into 11,500 farming committees in 1946. They also organized 210,000 farmers aged 18-35 into a semi-military organization, the so-called “self-defense forces,” who supported the projects of the farming committees. During three weeks of land reform, 98 percent of confiscated land was distributed to farmers; poor farmers suddenly became the landlord of up to 13,200 square meters of land. Thereafter, they tended to farm hard and gave their allegiance to the Party.

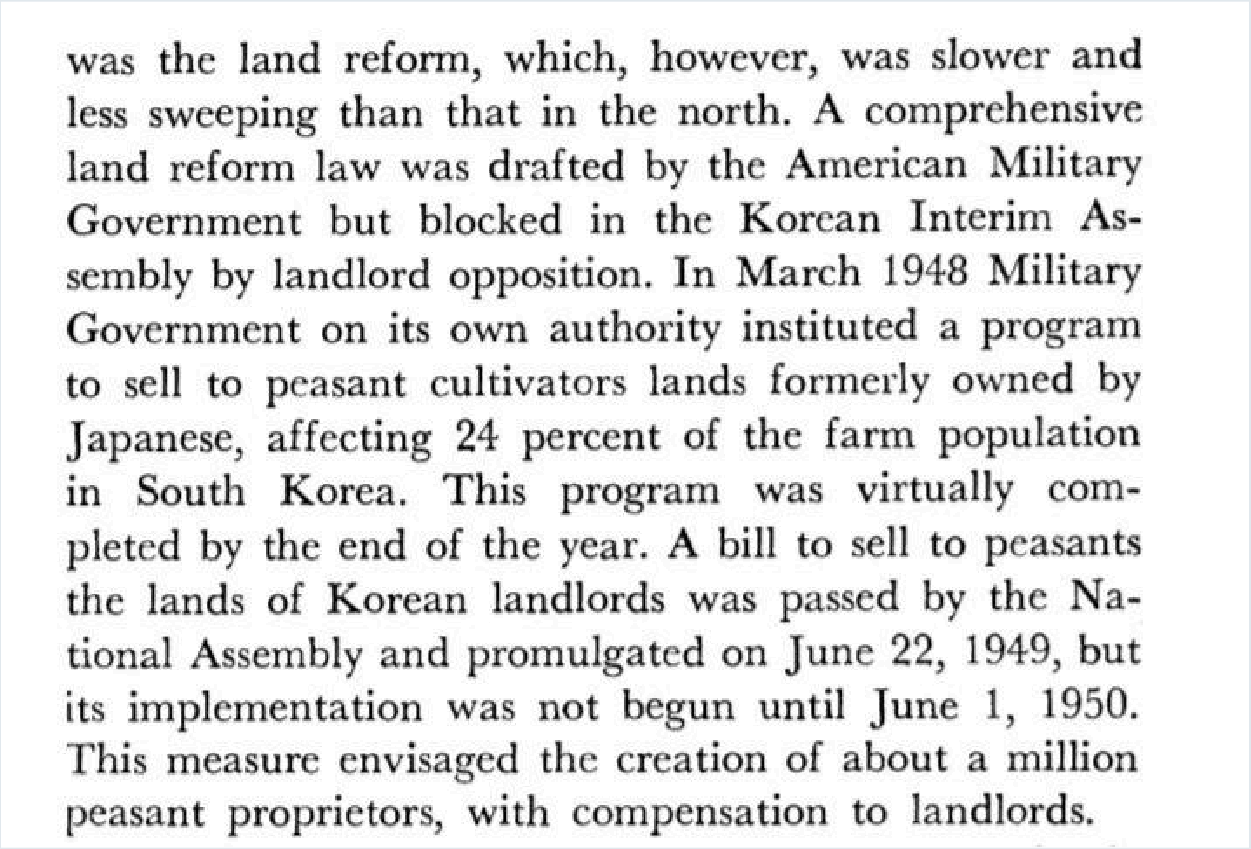
The farming committee members were instrumental in carrying out the land reform, mostly by aiding in distribution and record keeping. Committee members subsequently became Communist party members and supported the regime at the regional and local level. Following the birth of the North Korean state, individual ownership of land was ended by another national project. The collective farming system, implemented over the course of 1954-1958, resulted in farmers becoming employees on collective farms. The pretext for the collective farming system was communal ownership under the socialist system, but in reality it was a way to realize state control. Article 5 of the Land Reform Law was abolished and the farmers’ petit-bourgeois dreams of personal and equitable land ownership were swept away in the name of socialist modernization.

That all sounds pretty good. But what about the south? I'm being told it sucked big time.

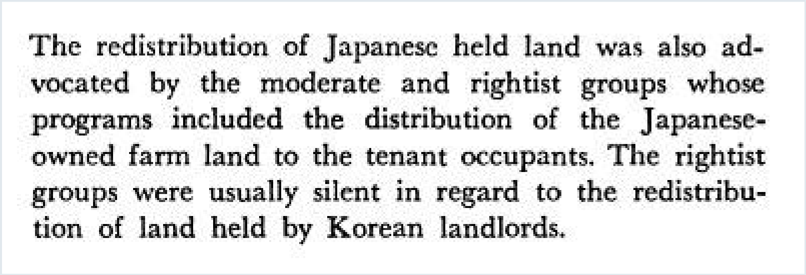


In its first year USAMGIK issued a series of social and economic reforms that fell short of Korean expectations and stood in sharp contrast to the reforms already underway in the North. Moreover, many of the new policies were slow to be realized. In spite of the decisive land reform in the North, USAMGIK delayed land reform until 1948, and then it was only a redistribution of Japanese-held land, leaving the holdings of large Korean landowners intact. The failure of land reform in the South was a major problem for USAMGIK, and it was a singular mistake for an occupying authority that was desperately in need of public support. USAMGIK issued new labor laws that limited the work week to sixty hours

The piddling reforms the US Military Government tried to push through were either blocked by landlords or verrrrrry slowly acted upon. Where the north was expropriating from Korean and Japanese landlords alike, the south was only acting against the Japanese, when it acted at all.

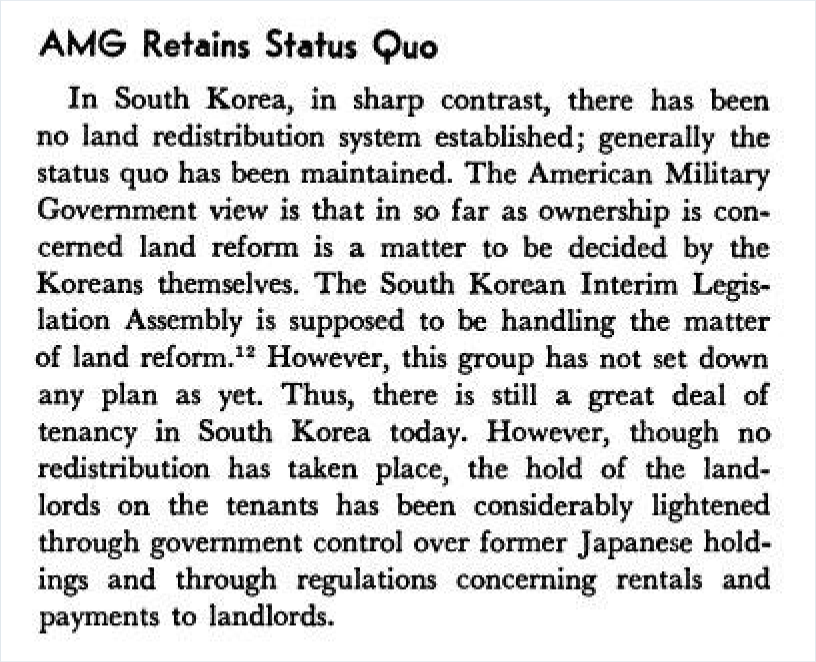


was the land reform, which, however, was slower and less sweeping than that in the north. A comprehensive land reform law was drafted by the American Military Government but blocked in the Korean Interim Assembly by landlord opposition. In March 1948 Military Government on its own authority instituted a program to sell to peasant cultivators lands formerly owned by Japanese, affecting 24 percent of the farm population in South Korea. This program was virtually completed by the end of the year. A bill to sell to peasants the lands of Korean landlords was passed by the National Assembly and promulgated on June 22, 1949, but its implementation was not begun until June 1, 1950. This measure envisaged the creation of about a million peasant proprietors, with compensation to landlords.



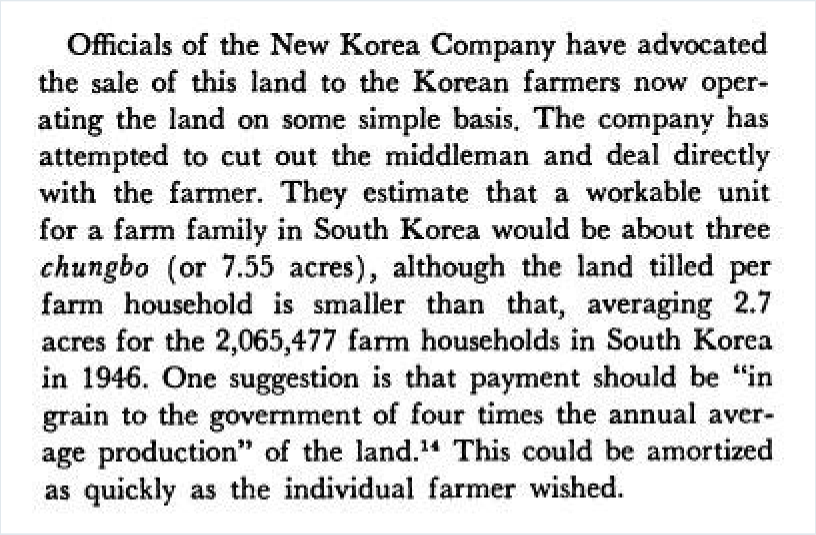
The redistribution of Japanese held land was also advocated by the moderate and rightist groups whose programs included the distribution of the Japanese-owned farm land to the tenant occupants. The rightist groups were usually silent in regard to the redistribution of land held by Korean landlords.

When progress was made, it was never on the same level as the north. If expropriation happened, landlords were compensated. Rather than giving the land to peasants directly, the government sold it.



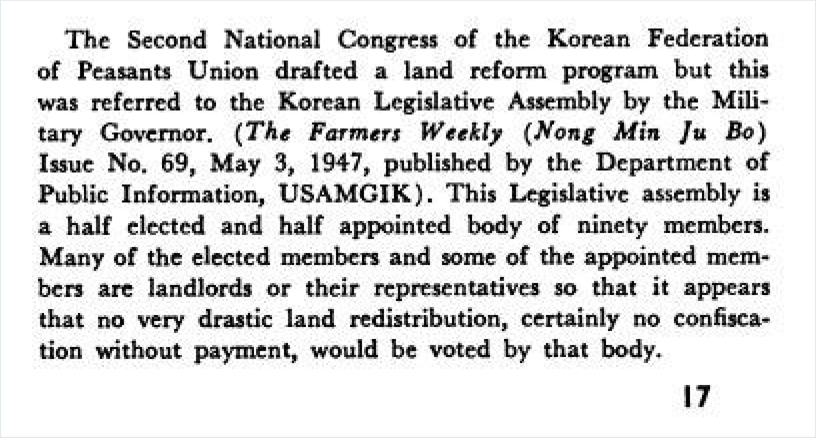
AMG Retains Status Quo

In South Korea, in sharp contrast, there has been no land redistribution system established; generally the status quo has been maintained. The American Military Government view is that in so far as ownership is concerned land reform is a matter to be decided by the Koreans themselves. The South Korean Interim Legislation Assembly is supposed to be handling the matter of land reform.[12] However, this group has not set down any plan as yet. Thus, there is still a great deal of tenancy in South Korea today. However, though no redistribution has taken place, the hold of the landlords on the tenants has been considerably lightened through government control over former Japanese holdings and through regulations concerning rentals and payments to landlords.

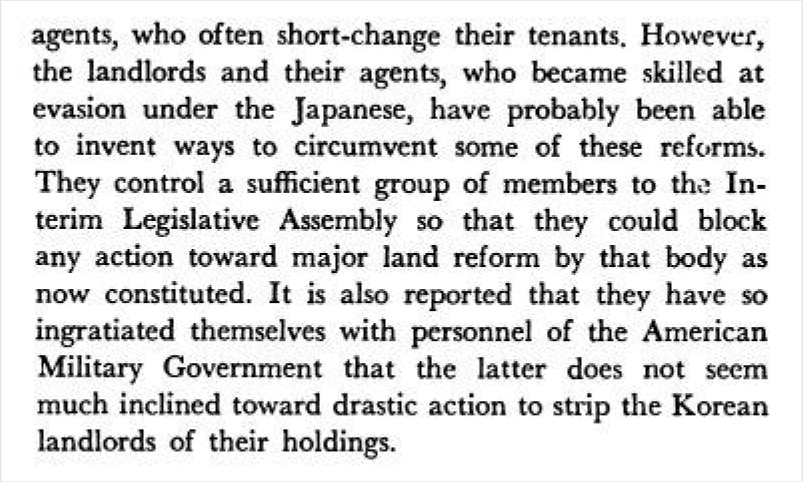


Officials of the New Korea Company have advocated the sale of this land to the Korean farmers now operating the land on some simple basis. The company has attempted to cut out the middleman and deal directly with the farmer. They estimate that a workable unit for a farm family in South Korea would be about three *chungbo* (or 7.55 acres), although the land tilled per farm household is smaller than that, averaging 2.7 acres for the 2,065,477 farm households in South Korea in 1946. One suggestion is that payment should be "in grain to the government of four times the annual average production" of the land.[14] This could be amortized as quickly as the individual farmer wished.

Landlords frequently went unpunished for their abuses — to say nothing of the ones who actually entered the government, or got in the good graces of the Americans.



The Second National Congress of the Korean Federation of Peasants Union drafted a land reform program but this was referred to the Korean Legislative Assembly by the Military Governor. (*The Farmers Weekly* (*Nong Min Ju Bo*) Issue No. 69, May 3, 1947, published by the Department of Public Information, USAMGIK). This Legislative assembly is a half elected and half appointed body of ninety members. Many of the elected members and some of the appointed members are landlords or their representatives so that it appears that no very drastic land redistribution, certainly no confiscation without payment, would be voted by that body.



agents, who often short-change their tenants. However, the landlords and their agents, who became skilled at evasion under the Japanese, have probably been able to invent ways to circumvent some of these reforms. They control a sufficient group of members to the Interim Legislative Assembly so that they could block any action toward major land reform by that body as now constituted. It is also reported that they have so ingratiated themselves with personnel of the American Military Government that the latter does not seem much inclined toward drastic action to strip the Korean landlords of their holdings.

There's a slight coda to this, as well. Another notable attempt at peace in the 1940s came with a proposal from the north, where southern leaders were invited to a peninsula-wide conference. The US and the rightists objected, but the leaders still went. This is a brief summary of the history of the northern/southern half peninsula — a people attempting to assert themselves and take their rightful place in the world, only to be told to sit down and shut up. If we don't know the history, the real history, we're doomed to follow this cycle until the end of time. I would prefer we did not do that.

DID THE NORTH START THE KOREAN WAR?

According to popular myth, the Korean War (1950-1953) began when the North Korean Communist army crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded non-Communist South Korea. As Kim il-sung's North Korean army, armed with Soviet tanks, quickly overran South Korea, the United States came to South Korea's aid. It then follows that the fighting ended on 27 July 1953 when the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed. The agreement created the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to separate North and South Korea, and allowed the return of prisoners. However, no peace treaty was ever signed, and the two Koreas are technically still at war, engaged in a frozen conflict. In April 2018, the leaders of North and South Korea met at the DMZ and agreed to work towards a treaty to formally end the Korean War. In this section I will provide concrete proof that this account of events is no more than liberal fanfiction. The Korean War did *not* begin because the North invaded the South. This pattern of inciting the enemy "to fire the first shot" is well established in US military doctrine. It pertains to creating a "War Pretext Incident" which provides the aggressor to pretext to intervene on the grounds of "Self- Defence". It characterised the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in 1941, triggered by deception and provocation of which US officials had advanced knowledge. Pearl Harbor was the justification for America's entry into World War II. The Tonkin Gulf Incident in August 1964 was the pretext for the US to wage war on North Vietnam, following the adoption of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution by the US Congress, which granted President Lyndon B. Johnson the authority to wage war on Communist North Vietnam. I. F. Stone's analysis refutes "the standard telling" ... that the Korean War was an unprovoked aggression by the North Koreans beginning on June 25, 1950, undertaken at the behest of the Soviet Union to extend the Soviet sphere of influence to the whole of Korea, completely surprising the South Koreans, the U.S., and the U.N.":

> *But was it a surprise? Could an attack by 70,000 men using at least 70 tanks launched simultaneously at four different points have been a surprise?*
>
> *Stone gathers contemporary reports from South Korean, U.S. and U.N. sources documenting what was known before June 25. The head of the U.S. CIA, Rear Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenloetter, is reported to have said on the record, "that American intelligence was aware that 'conditions existed in Korea that could have meant an invasion this week or next.'" (p. 2) Stone writes that "America's leading military commentator, Hanson Baldwin of the New York Times, a trusted confidant of the Pentagon, reported that they [U.S. military documents] showed 'a marked buildup by the North Korean People's Army along the 38th Parallel beginning in the early days of June.'" (p. 4)*
>
> *How and why did U.S. President Truman so quickly decide by June 27 to commit the U.S. military to battle in South Korea? Stone makes a strong case that there were those in the U.S. government and military who saw a war in Korea and the resulting instability in East Asia as in the U.S. national interest.*

Not only did UN/US intelligence conclude that DPRK hadn't even mobilized its forces prior to the "invasion" and that there wasn't even a threat of one, but UN archives confirms the US & Rhee collaborated to attack DPRK and bait it into retaliating:

No empire (or nation) instigates a war on the periphery that is already politically won and most empires instigate actual wars on the periphery only if loss of a political or trade war is imminent. But this planned war was not only to save an outpost on the periphery of empire, this was a war to save the empire. There was nothing to lose in Korea, it was going to be lost anyway, and there was an entire world to gain by mobilizing the population of the industrialized world for a war to suppress the renewed breaks for economic freedom of the emerging world. Though the plans were made in State, an analysis of our sources will conclude the excuse for the Korean War was obviously staged by General Douglas MacArthur, South Korean President Syngman Rhee, and Chiang Kai-shek of Formosa under the political cover of the American hard right (called the China Lobby), McCarthyism, and the CIA's "Mighty Wurlitzer."

Highlights from Stone's book outline a war created by those threatened with the loss of their power and wealth. Massive riots were breaking out all over South Korea with the goal of North and South Korea reuniting, and over 100,000 were killed. Crack military units were defecting to the so-called left and the CIA and South Korean government were unable to control the elections. Syngman Rhee's puppet government was voted out wholesale and the next to go would be Syngman Rhee.

North and South Korea were going to rejoin outside Western control; South Korean troops pulled back from the 38th parallel the day before the war started; South Korean government press releases were saying a North Korean attack was imminent; the UN inspected the 38th parallel—just hours before the war started— and concluded there was no imminent attack; and intelligence briefings concluded that North Korea was not prepared for war yet ships were in place to evacuate American families. Everything was set to fabricate an excuse for war.

But the clincher that the invasion of South Korea was a much more elaborately staged war than Hitler's staged invasion of Poland was North Korea's announcement that South Korea had invaded North Korea in three places and had been hurled back. Author John Gunther, General Douglas MacArthur's personal biographer, just happened to be in MacArthur's personal railroad car when a high occupation official returned from being called to a phone, saying, "A big story has just broken. The South Koreans have attacked North Korea."[8]

That statement which accidentally slipped into history and Stone's cold political analysis verify the North Korean claim that South Korea, under American guidance and promise of protection by America's full military might, started that war. (A third verification was the couple of days it took to dislodge South Korea from Heiju, three miles above the 38th parallel.) I.F. Stone describes how many of the massive battles with hordes of Koreans and Chinese attacking were nothing more than military press releases (Social Control belief systems manufactured by intelligence service wordsmiths and passed out through military and government channels). Stone would quote the headlines built from those press releases and then print the communiques from ground commanders who were essentially searching for enemies

In February 1950, Syngman Rhee visited the U.S. Far East Command in Japan and returned with specific instructions from MacArthur on provoking an armed aggression on the northern part of the Republic before July of the same year. (From the testimony of Moon Hak Bong, former adviser of the C.I.C. of the U.S. military government and the political adviser of Syngman Rhee)

In order to provoke the Korean war, Johnson, U.S. Secretary of Defence, and Bradley, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, came to Tokyo in mid-June, 1950, and held a series of special secret meetings with MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Far East Command.

In the wake of this, that notorious warmonger John Foster Dulles, personally flew into South Korea on June 17, 1950 with a mission of putting a fuze to war. After inspecting the 38th parallel on June 18 and making the final examination of the "northward expedition" plan in a trench, Dulles blustered that "the United States was ready to render both material and moral aid to South Korea fighting against communism" and that "the communists would eventually lose their domination over North Korea." (Seoul, June 19, 1950, UP.)

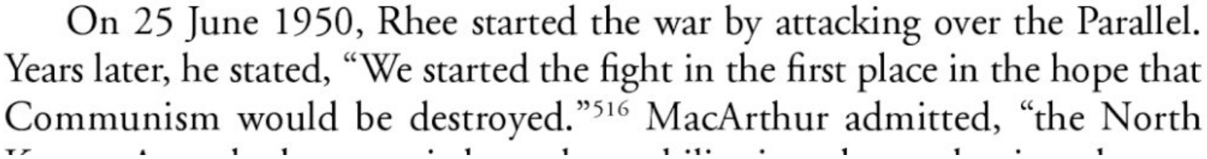
A series of ensuing occurrences served to substantiate that Dulles finally ordered Syngman Rhee to ignite a war at that time.

Upon returning to Seoul from the 38th parallel, Dulles instructed Syngman Rhee as follows: "The time is ripe. Start the aggression against the north accompanied by a counter-propaganda on the grounds that the north has invaded the south first... If you can but hold out for two weeks, everything will go on smoothly, for during this period the United States, by accusing North Korea of attacking South Korea, will compel the United Nations to take action in whose name land, naval and air forces would be mobilized." (From the testimony of Kim Hyo Suk, the former Home Minister of the Syngman Rhee puppet government).

And in his letter dated June 20 to Syngman Rhee upon his leaving Korea, Dulles said: "I attach great importance to the decisive role which your country can play in the great drama that is unfolding." (From a document found by the Korean People's Army in the secret archives of Syngman Rhee when Seoul was liberated).

After returning to Japan from South Korea, Dulles had a lengthy talk with MacArthur on June 22, 1950, and declared that the United States would take a "positive action" "to preserve peace in the Far East." (*New York Times,* June 22, 1960)

And here’s the US backed Syngman Rhee himself more or less going "lol yeah we started the Korean War to destroy Communism":



On 25 June 1950, Rhee started the war by attacking over the Parallel. Years later, he stated, “We started the fight in the first place in the hope that Communism would be destroyed.”[516] MacArthur admitted, “the North

The Korean War was the first major military operation undertaken by the US in the wake of World War II, launched at the very outset of what was euphemistically called “The Cold War”. In many respects it was a continuation of World War II, whereby Korean lands under Japanese colonial occupation were, from one day to the next, handed over to a new colonial power, the United States of America. There was no “Liberation” of Korea following the entry of US forces. Quite the opposite. At the Potsdam Conference (July–August 1945), the US and the Soviet Union agreed to dividing Korea, along the 38th parallel. On 25 June 1950, following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 82, General Douglas MacArthur, who headed the US military government in occupied Japan was appointed Commander in Chief of the so-called United Nations Command (UNCOM). According to Bruce Cumings, the Korean War “bore a strong resemblance to the air war against Imperial Japan in the second world war and was often directed by the same US military leaders” including generals Douglas MacArthur and Curtis Lemay. Until the end of 1949 Stalin did not plan any aggression against South Korea. Instead he was worried about an attack from the South, and he did everything to avoid provoking Washington and Seoul. In 1947-1948 Soviet leaders still believed in the possibility of a unification of Korea, and refused to sign a separate friendship and cooperation treaty with North Korean leader Kim II Sung (See, e.g. coded message N121973, 2 May 1947, The 8th Directorate of the General Staff, Armed Forces, pp.4-6. Archives of the President of the Russian Federation (hereafter APFR); cable from Ambassador Shtykov to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, 19 January 1949, APRF). In the beginning of 1949 the Soviet embassy began to alert the Kremlin to the growing number of violations of the 38th parallel by South Korean police and armed force. On 3 February 1949 Soviet Ambassador to North Korea Shtykov bitterly complained that the North Koreans did not have enough trained personnel, adequate weapons and sufficient number of bullets to rebuff intensifying incursions from the South. Receiving Kim II Sung in the Kremlin on 5 March 194, Stalin showed an open concern about growing pressure from the opponent in the vicinity of the 38th parallel and emphatically told Kim "The 38th parallel must be peaceful. It is very important" (APRF, Fond 45, list 1, file 346, pp. 13-23, 46). After Kim's return to North Korea, the situation did not improve. On 17 April 1949, Stalin informed his ambassador of an imminent attack from the South. The Soviet ambassador confirmed that a large-scale war was being prepared by Seoul with the help of Americans and raised alarm about the inability of North Korean troops to withstand the aggression (Shtykov report to Stalin, 2 May 1949, Archives of Foreign Policy, Russian Federatioon (AVP RF). See also Marshal Vasilevsky and Ambassador Shtykov's cable to Stalin on 20 April 1949, N 17064, APRF). In May-August 1949 the Kremlin and Pyongyang continued to exchange data about a possible attack from the South. The USSR was clearly afraid of such an attack, and was nervous not knowing pondered how to prevent the war. Stalin repeatedly castigated Ambassador

Shtykov for failing to do everything in his power to maintain peace on the 38th parallel (See, e.g. Stalin cable to Shtykov, 30 October, 1949, APRF).

The USSR, believing in a right to self-determination, fulfilled its promises to the DPRK and left, while the US maintained its illegal occupation and backed Syngman Rhee, an unelected dictator who then spent the next two years preparing for an invasion of the North all the while brutally repressing and slaughtering any dissenters, whether Communists or the average "South Korean" wishing to once again be unified. Koreans voted for Kim Il-sung and in response the US installed Syngman Rhee as the dictator of ROK. The USSR immediately ended its occupation after the election as promised while the US maintained its occupation and proceeded to instigate the Korean War in an attempt to exterminate the revolutionary gains. Since then, this dissent has been systematically erased and ignored within the sphere of bourgeois media. DPRK has fought long and hard and has had an arduous journey with a commendable success in recovering from the brutal blow that was the farcical dissolution of the USSR.

As we recall, a US military government was established in South Korea on September 8, 1945, three weeks after the surrender of Japan on August 15th 1945. Moreover, Japanese officials in South Korea assisted the US Army Military Government (USAMG) (1945-48) led by General Hodge in ensuring this transition. Japanese colonial administrators in Seoul as well as their Korean police officials worked hand in glove with the new colonial masters. From the outset, the US military government refused to recognize the provisional government of the People's Republic of Korea (PRK), which was committed to major social reforms including land distribution, laws protecting the rights of workers, minimum wage legislation and the reunification of North and South Korea. The PRK was non-aligned with an anti-colonial mandate, calling for the "establishment of close relations with the United States, USSR, England, and China, and positive opposition to any foreign influences interfering with the domestic affairs of the state" (Martin Hart-Landsberg, Korea: Division, Reunification, & U.S. Foreign Policy. Monthly Review Press. New York, 1998 pp. 65–6). The PRK was abolished by military decree in September 1945 by the USAMG. There was no democracy, no liberation, and no independence. While Japan was treated as a defeated Empire, South Korea was identified as a colonial territory to be administered under US military rule and US occupation forces.

They have recovered their agricultural output to that of the pre-1990s famine. They have successfully obtained nuclear deterrent, and they have immediately decided to - contrary to the deceptive portrayal of the DPRK govt as being an oppressive "regime" that cares not for the safety and livelihood of its people - seek denuclearization and pursue peace and economic prosperity. What the Korea's have achieved under the weight of Western imperialism must be unabashedly celebrated. The atrocities committed by the US must never be forgotten. What is currently happening in the Korean peninsula is a shining beacon of light for liberation on a global scale.

THE DESTRUCTION OF KOREA

The Korean War, a “limited war” for the US and UN forces, was for Koreans a total war. The human and material resources of North and South Korea were used to their utmost. The physical destruction and loss of life on both sides was almost beyond comprehension, but the North suffered the greater damage, due to American saturation bombing and the scorched-earth policy of the retreating UN forces (Far East Command ordered General Walker to “destroy everything that might be of use to the enemy” as the Eighth Army fled South in December 1950. Roy E. Appleman, Disaster in Korea: The Chinese Confront MacArthur (College Station, TX: Texas A & M Pres, 1989), p. 360). The US Air Force estimated that North Korea’s destruction was proportionately greater than that of Japan in the Second World War, where the US had turned 64 major cities to rubble and used the atomic bomb to destroy two others. American planes dropped 635,000 tons of bombs on Korea -- that is, essentially on North Korea --including 32,557 tons of napalm, compared to 503,000 tons of bombs dropped in the entire Pacific theatre of World War II (Cited in Rosemary Foot, A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 207 – 208). The number of Korean dead, injured or missing by war’s end approached three million, ten percent of the overall population. The majority of those killed were in the North, which had half of the population of the South; although the DPRK does not have official figures, possibly twelve to fifteen percent of the population was killed in the war, a figure close to or surpassing the proportion of Soviet citizens killed in World War II (Jon Halliday, “The North Korean Enigma,” New Left Review no. 127 (May – June 1981), p. 29). The act which inflicted the greatest loss of civilian life in the Korean War by far, one which the North Koreans have claimed ever since was America’s greatest war crime, was the aerial bombardment of North Korean population centers. American control of the skies over Korea was overwhelming. Soviet MIGs, flown by Soviet, Chinese, and North Korean pilots, were sometimes effective against American air power. But under Stalin’s orders, the Soviet fighter planes were strictly limited in number and in the range they were allowed to fly, lest US-Soviet air battles lead to a larger war (The extent of Soviet air involvement in the Korean War was long a secret of the Cold War, whose details only become known after the collapse of the USSR. See Xiaoming Zhang, Red Wings over the Yalu: China, the Soviet Union, and the Air War in Korea (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002)). And in any case, Soviet air support did not come until the end of 1950. During the summer and fall, North Korean air defenses were virtually non-existent. Lightly armed, local self-defense units in occupied South Korea could only watch and suffer as their towns and villages were obliterated from the air (US National Archives, Record Group 242, shipping advice 2013, item 1/191. Organization of Armed Home Defense Units (DPRK), September 1950. Reports include graphic descriptions of an air attack on the city of Yŏch’ŏn on August 26, and the bombing of an elementary school on September 1). By the end of the war, North Korea claimed that only two modern buildings remained standing in Pyongyang.

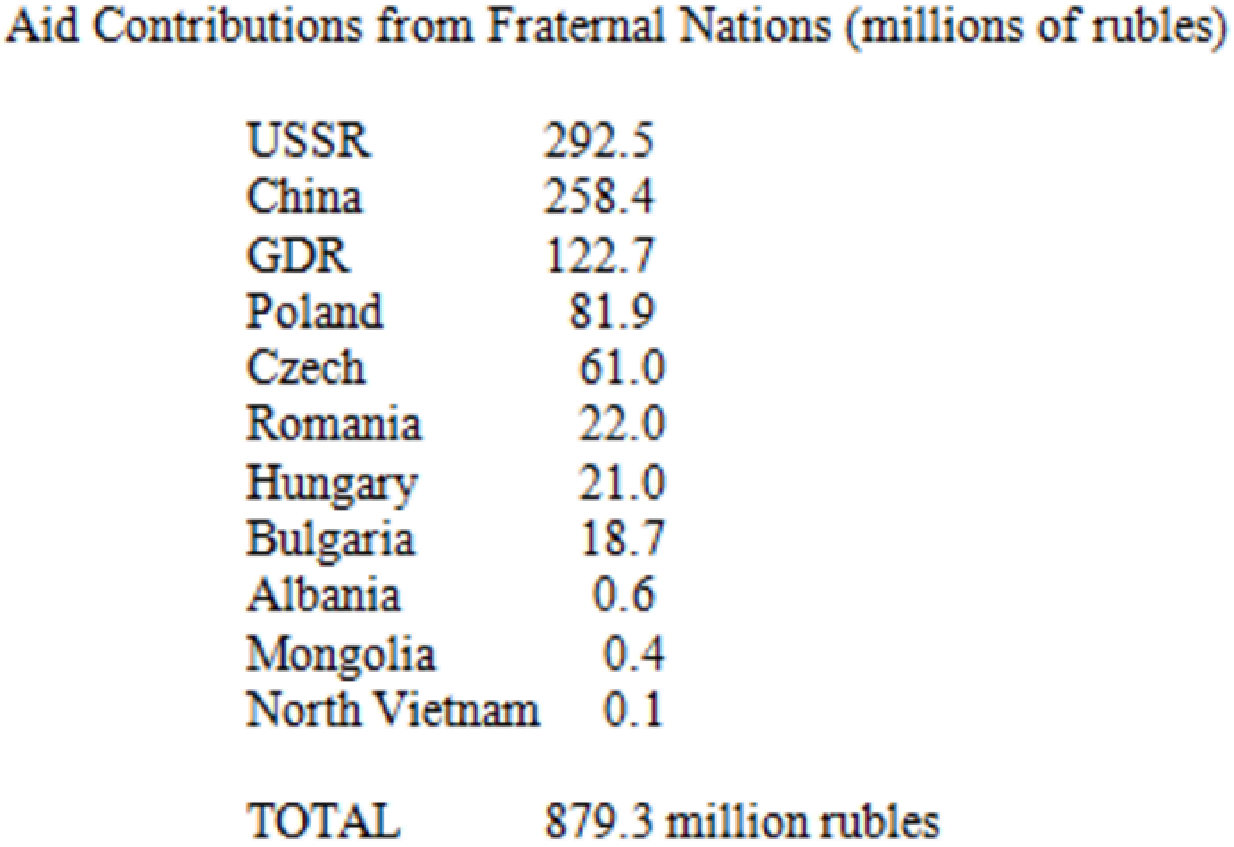
For the Americans, strategic bombing made perfect sense, giving advantage to American technological prowess against the enemy’s numerical superiority. The American command dismissed British concerns that mass bombardment would turn world opinion against them, insisting that air attacks were accurate and civilian casualties limited (Conrad C. Crane, American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950 – 1953 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), pp. 42 –43). Russian accusations of indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets did not register with the Americans at all. But for the North Koreans, living in fear of B-29 attacks for nearly three years, including the possibility of atomic bombs, the American air war left a deep and lasting impression. The DPRK government never forgot the lesson of North Korea's vulnerability to American air attack, and for half a century after the Armistice continued to strengthen anti-aircraft defenses, build underground installations, and eventually develop nuclear weapons to ensure that North Korea would not find itself in such a position again. The long-term psychological effect of the war on the whole of North Korean society cannot be overestimated. The war against the United States, more than any other single factor, gave North Koreans a collective sense of anxiety and fear of outside threats that would continue long after the war's end.

North Korea's considerable economic achievements since liberation were all but completely wiped out by the war. By 1949, after two years of a planned economy, North Korea had recovery from the post-liberation chaos, and economic output had reached the level of the colonial period (US National Archives, Record Group 59. U.S. Embassy to State, "Economic Conditions in North Korea," October 11, 1949, p. 8). Plans for 1950 were to increase output again by a third in the North, and the DPRK leadership had expected further economic gains following integration with the agriculturally more productive South after unification. According to DPRK figures, the war destroyed some 8,700 factories, 5,000 schools, 1,000 hospitals and 600,000 homes ("The Three Year Plan," Kyŏngje kŏnsŏl [Economic Construction], September 1956, pp. 5 –6). Most of the destruction occurred in 1950 and 1951. To escape the bombing, entire factories were moved underground, along with schools, hospitals, government offices, and much of the population. Agriculture was devastated, and famine loomed. Peasants hid underground during the day and came out to farm at night. Destruction of livestock, shortages of seed, farm tools, and fertilizer, and loss of manpower reduced agricultural production to the level of bare subsistence at best. The Nodong Sinmun newspaper referred to 1951 as "the year of unbearable trials," a phrase revived in the famine years of the 1990s (Nodong Sinmun, March 16, 1952, p. 1). Worse was yet to come. By the fall of 1952, there were no effective targets left for US planes to hit. Every significant town, city and industrial area in North Korea had already been bombed. In the spring of 1953, the Air Force targeted irrigation dams on the Yalu River, both to destroy the North Korean rice crop and to pressure the Chinese, who would have to supply more food aid to the North. Five reservoirs were hit, flooding thousands of acres of farmland, inundating whole towns and laying waste to the essential food source for millions of North Koreans (Callum MacDonald, Korea: The War Before Vietnam (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 241 – 242). Only emergency assistance from China, the USSR, and other socialist countries prevented widespread famine.

When the fighting stopped in the summer of 1953, the entire Korean peninsula lay in utter ruin. South of the DMZ, the United States and its allies led an ambitious, and well-funded, effort to rehabilitate South Korea under the auspices of the United Nations Korea Reconstruction Agency (See Stephen Hugh Lee, "The United Nations Korea Reconstruction Agency in War and Peace," in Chae-Jin Lee and Young-ick Lew, eds., Korea and the Korean War (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2002), pp. 357 – 96). North Korea, even more devastated than the South and suffering as well from a labor shortage caused by the population hemorrhage of the war, had far fewer resources with which to rebuild itself. Yet through a combination of tremendous work and sacrifice on the part of the North Korean people, generous economic and technical assistance from the "fraternal" socialist countries, and the advantage of a pre-war industrial infrastructure more developed than that of South Korea, the DPRK soon achieved economic growth rates that far surpassed South Korea's into the 1970s. In the late 1950s North Korea's growth rate of total industrial output (averaging 39% between 1953 and 1960) was probably the highest in the world (John Yoon Tai Kuark, "A Comparative Study of Economic Development in North and South Korea during the Post-Korean War Period," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1966, p. 32; Joseph S. Chung, The North Korean Economy: Structure and Development (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974), pp. 146-47). North Korea had been virtually destroyed as an industrial society, and the first priority of the DPRK leadership was to re-build industry. Within days of the armistice, Kim Il Sung sent a report to the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang, detailing the extent of war damage and the need for Soviet assistance to rehabilitate North Korea's industrial economy. "Fraternal" aid to the DPRK began during the Korean War. Of course the great bulk of direct military assistance came from the USSR and China, but the East European "People's Democracies" also contributed to the war effort with logistical support, technical aid, medical supplies and the like. Among the most poignant forms of assistance was the taking in of thousands of Korean war orphans. Romania alone reportedly sheltered some 1,500 of these children, who were returned to the DPRK with the completion of North Korea's 1957 – 1961 Five-Year Plan. The first group of 205 Korean children were sent to the GDR in January 1953. These and hundreds of others were also returned to North Korea several years later.

Kim Il Sung led a delegation to Moscow in September 1953, primarily to settle the terms of Soviet assistance. The Soviet government agreed to cancel or postpone repayment for all of North Korea's outstanding debts, and reiterated its promise to give the DPRK one billion rubles in outright aid, both monetary and in the form of industrial equipment and consumer goods. Soviet technicians were sent to North Korea to help with the rehabilitation effort. The bulk of factory reconstruction in post-war North Korea was supervised by Soviet experts. Pyongyang also received promises of aid from East European countries and the Mongolian People's Republic, the latter promising to send North Korea some 86,500 head of livestock. The third-largest contributor of external assistance after the Soviet Union and China was East Germany, which played a major role in the rebuilding of Hamhŭng, North Korea's second-largest city and an important industrial center. Kim visited Beijing in November and received similarly generous pledges from the PRC, reflecting in part the Chinese government's interest in competing with the USSR for influence in North Korea. China cancelled North Korea's debts from the Korean War, and offered the DPRK 800 million yuan in aid for the period 1954 – 1957, of which 300 million would come in the first year. North Korea and China also signed an agreement on economic and cultural cooperation similar to the one signed between the DPRK and USSR in March 1949. China helped North Korea in factory reconstruction, although not on the scale that the USSR did, and became a major source for North Korean consumer goods, including textiles, cotton, and foodstuffs. Chinese technical experts went to North Korea, and Koreans traveled to China for technical training. But perhaps the most important contribution that China made to North Korea's reconstruction, in addition to monetary aid and debt cancellation, was the manpower supplied by Chinese People's Volunteer (CPV) troops who remained in North Korea until 1958. These troops, who numbered in the thousands, helped repair roads and rail lines damaged by war and rebuild schools, bridges, tunnels and irrigation dams. In labor-short North Korea, the physical assistance of Chinese People's Volunteers was invaluable for the rehabilitation of the war-damaged infrastructure.

The period of post-war reconstruction in North Korea was the first and only time the Soviet Union, China, and the Soviet-aligned countries of Eastern Europe and Mongolia cooperated on a large-scale economic project of this nature. It was the historical high point of "international socialist solidarity," one that would never be repeated after the USSR and China fell out in the early 1960s. Considering that the Soviet Union was still rebuilding from the devastation of World War II, that China had only recently concluded its civil war, and that East Germany (the third-largest aid source) was rebuilding from war as well, the scale of aid to North Korea is remarkable. Contemporary Soviet sources give a breakdown in foreign assistance to the DPRK between 1953 and 1960 as dividing roughly into thirds, no doubt a division of labor suggested by Moscow. Exactly one-third (33.3%) of reconstruction aid came from the USSR, 29.4% from China, and 37.3% from other countries. The monetary figures do not take into account aid in labor, which was particularly important on the Chinese side.



Aid Contributions from Fraternal Nations (millions of rubles)

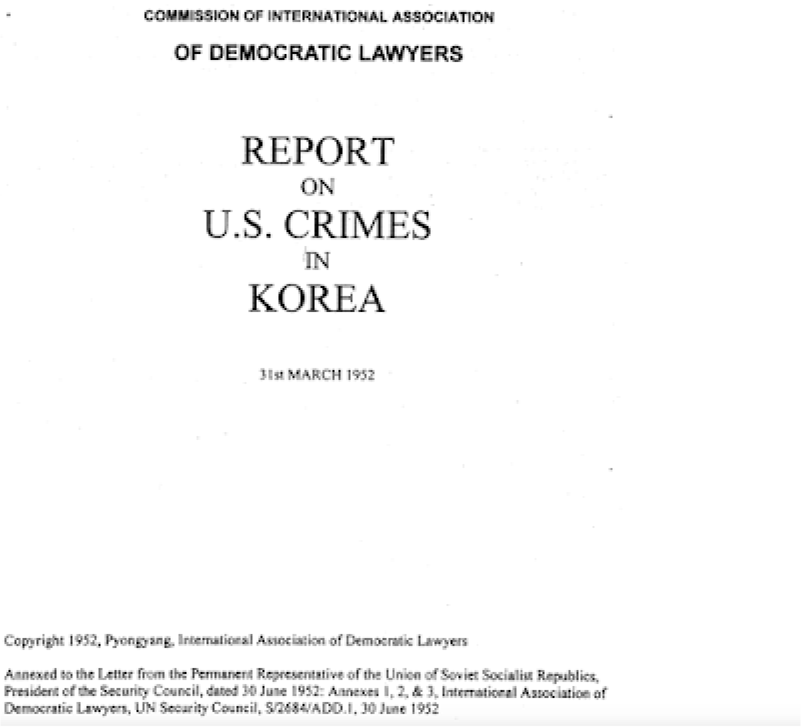
USSR	292.5
China	258.4
GDR	122.7
Poland	81.9
Czech	61.0
Romania	22.0
Hungary	21.0
Bulgaria	18.7
Albania	0.6
Mongolia	0.4
North Vietnam	0.1
TOTAL	879.3 million rubles

Source: SSSR i Koreia (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1988), p. 256

North Korea was dependent on fraternal assistance for more than 80% of its industrial reconstruction needs between 1954 and 1956, the period of the Three-Year Plan. North Korea could not possibly have rebuilt its economy as quickly as it did without this massive inflow of aid into nearly every sector of production and consumption. But the DPRK did not remain aid-dependent for long. Partly this was out of necessity, as socialist-bloc aid was intended from the beginning to be phased out as reconstruction was completed. Yet it is remarkable how quickly North Korea's aid dependency dropped – North Korea's declaration of "self-reliance" by the end of the 1950s was not without substance. In 1954, 33.4% of North Korea's state revenue came from foreign aid; in 1960, the proportion was down to a paltry 2.6%. By contrast, well over half of South Korea's government revenue came from foreign assistance in 1956. By the early 1960's, well before South Korea's industrial take-off, the North had impressively re-industrialized. This difference cannot be explained by foreign aid alone, which was far greater in absolute terms in South Korea than in the North. The regime's ability to mobilize the North Korean population was also indispensable for the success of this project. As Kim Il Sung had said, economic reconstruction would require all the work and resources the North Korean people could muster.

War Crimes in Korea: Guilty!

Thanks to the International Action Center and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), a Non-Governmental Organization which was founded in 1946 and acts as a consultative group to UNESCO, we have an interesting document that outlines some of America's actions on the Korean Peninsula during the early 1950s.In March 1952, the IADL issued a Report on U.S. Crimes in Korea during the Korean War. Here is a screen capture showing the title page:



COMMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS

REPORT
ON
U.S. CRIMES
IN
KOREA

31st MARCH 1952

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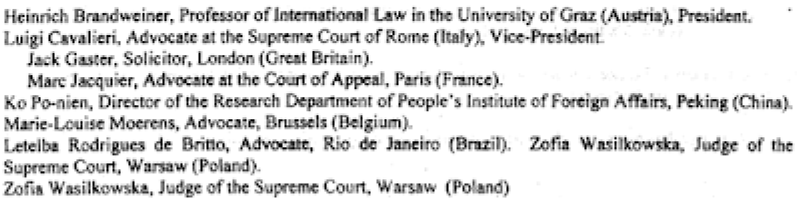
Annexed to the Letter from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, President of the Security Council, dated 30 June 1952: Annexes 1, 2, & 3, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, UN Security Council, S/2684/ADD.1, 30 June 1952

In the early 1950s, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea repeatedly asked the United Nations to protest violations of international law by their enemies, the United States-led international coalition. These requests were ignored by the United Nations and, as such, the Council of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers set up a Commission consisting of lawyers from several nations to investigate these allegations with a "boots on the ground" trip to Korea which took place from March 3rd to March 19th, 1952, visiting the provinces of North and South Piengan, Hwang Hai, Kang Wan, including the towns of Pyongyang, Nampo, Kaichen, Pek Dong, Amju, Sinchon, Anak, Sariwon and Wonsan among others. Here is a list of the lawyers that saw first-hand what had occurred in the DPRK:



Heinrich Brandweiner, Professor of International Law in the University of Graz (Austria), President.
Luigi Cavalieri, Advocate at the Supreme Court of Rome (Italy), Vice-President.
Jack Gaster, Solicitor, London (Great Britain).
Marc Jacquier, Advocate at the Court of Appeal, Paris (France).
Ko Po-nien, Director of the Research Department of People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, Peking (China).
Marie-Louise Moerens, Advocate, Brussels (Belgium).
Letelba Rodrigues de Britto, Advocate, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). Zofia Wasilkowska, Judge of the Supreme Court, Warsaw (Poland).
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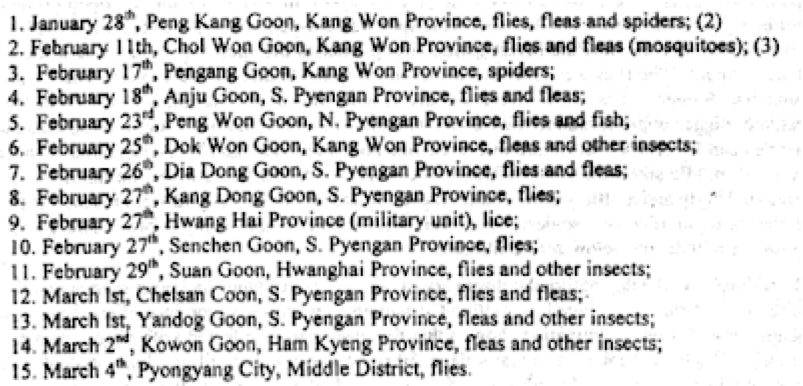
The IADL notes that, under United Nations rules, the U.S. intervention on the Korean Peninsula was unlawful and that President Truman's orders to the American Navy and Air Force should be considered an "aggressive act" that went against the United Nations Charter. Here are some of the more interesting findings of the IADL Commission:

1.) Bacteriological Warfare: The Commission investigated the allegations that American forces in Korea were using bacteriological weapons against both the DPRK armed forces and the nation's civilian population. Between the 28th of January and the 12th of March (i.e. during the dead of winter), 1952, the Commission found the following insects which carried bacteria in many different locations. This will be extensively touched upon in the next section, but for now, see this list as a trailer for what is to come:



1. January 28th, Peng Kang Goon, Kang Won Province, flies, fleas and spiders; (2)
2. February 11th, Chol Won Goon, Kang Won Province, flies and fleas (mosquitoes); (3)
3. February 17th, Pengang Goon, Kang Won Province, spiders;
4. February 18th, Anju Goon, S. Pyengan Province, flies and fleas;
5. February 23rd, Peng Won Goon, N. Pyengan Province, flies and fish;
6. February 25th, Dok Won Goon, Kang Won Province, fleas and other insects;
7. February 26th, Dia Dong Goon, S. Pyengan Province, flies and fleas;
8. February 27th, Kang Dong Goon, S. Pyengan Province, flies;
9. February 27th, Hwang Hai Province (military unit), lice;
10. February 27th, Senchen Goon, S. Pyengan Province, flies;
11. February 29th, Suan Goon, Hwanghai Province, flies and other insects;
12. March Ist, Chelsan Coon, S. Pyengan Province, flies and fleas;
13. March Ist, Yandog Goon, S. Pyengan Province, fleas and other insects;
14. March 2nd, Kowon Goon, Ham Kyeng Province, fleas and other insects;
15. March 4th, Pyongyang City, Middle District, flies.

The Commission noted that many of the insect species had not been found in Korea prior to the arrival of American forces and that many of them were found in mixed groups or clusters that would not normally be found together, for example, flies and spiders. It also noted the January temperature was 1 degree Celsius (just above freezing) to 5 degrees Celsius in February but that the prevailing average temperature was far below the freezing level, temperatures that are extremely hostile to insect life. The insects were infected with the following bacteria which include plague, cholera and typhus:

1.) Eberthella typhus

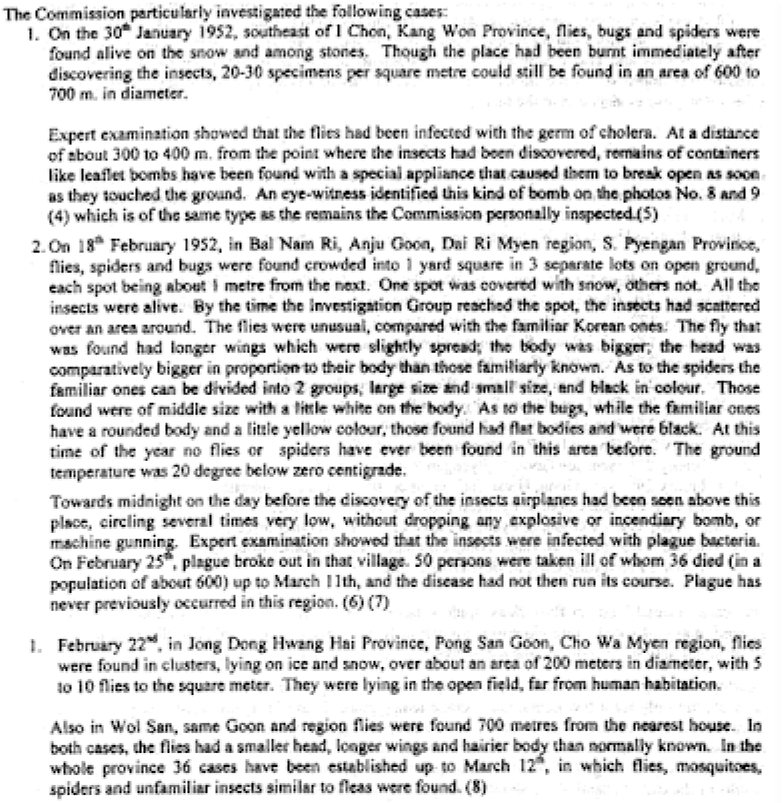
2.) Bacillus paratyphi A and B

3.) Shigella dysenteriae

4.) Vibrio cholera

5.) Pasturella pestis

Here are some examples of what was reported by local citizens:



The Commission particularly investigated the following cases:

1. On the 30th January 1952, southeast of I Chon, Kang Won Province, flies, bugs and spiders were found alive on the snow and among stones. Though the place had been burnt immediately after discovering the insects, 20-30 specimens per square metre could still be found in an area of 600 to 700 m. in diameter.

   Expert examination showed that the flies had been infected with the germ of cholera. At a distance of about 300 to 400 m. from the point where the insects had been discovered, remains of containers like leaflet bombs have been found with a special appliance that caused them to break open as soon as they touched the ground. An eye-witness identified this kind of bomb on the photos No. 8 and 9 (4) which is of the same type as the remains the Commission personally inspected.(5)

2. On 18th February 1952, in Bal Nam Ri, Anju Goon, Dai Ri Myen region, S. Pyengan Province, flies, spiders and bugs were found crowded into 1 yard square in 3 separate lots on open ground, each spot being about 1 metre from the next. One spot was covered with snow, others not. All the insects were alive. By the time the Investigation Group reached the spot, the insects had scattered over an area around. The flies were unusual, compared with the familiar Korean ones. The fly that was found had longer wings which were slightly spread; the body was bigger; the head was comparatively bigger in proportion to their body than those familiarly known. As to the spiders the familiar ones can be divided into 2 groups, large size and small size, and black in colour. Those found were of middle size with a little white on the body. As to the bugs, while the familiar ones have a rounded body and a little yellow colour, those found had flat bodies and were black. At this time of the year no flies or spiders have ever been found in this area before. The ground temperature was 20 degree below zero centigrade.

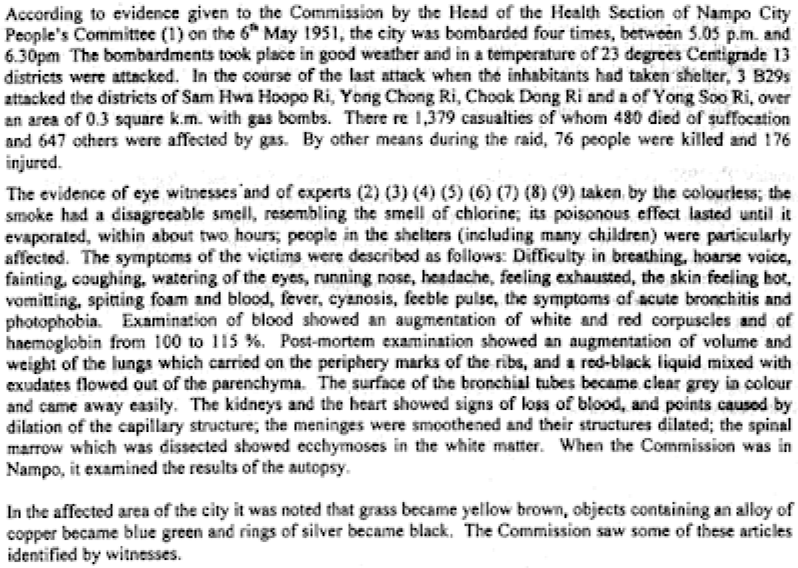
   Towards midnight on the day before the discovery of the insects airplanes had been seen above this place, circling several times very low, without dropping any explosive or incendiary bomb, or machine gunning. Expert examination showed that the insects were infected with plague bacteria. On February 25th, plague broke out in that village. 50 persons were taken ill of whom 36 died (in a population of about 600) up to March 11th, and the disease had not then run its course. Plague has never previously occurred in this region. (6) (7)

1. February 22nd, in Jong Dong Hwang Hai Province, Pong San Goon, Cho Wa Myen region, flies were found in clusters, lying on ice and snow, over about an area of 200 meters in diameter, with 5 to 10 flies to the square meter. They were lying in the open field, far from human habitation.

   Also in Wol San, same Goon and region flies were found 700 metres from the nearest house. In both cases, the flies had a smaller head, longer wings and hairier body than normally known. In the whole province 36 cases have been established up to March 12th, in which flies, mosquitoes, spiders and unfamiliar insects similar to fleas were found. (8)

In addition, a great quantity of fish of a species which live in regions between freshwater and saltwater were found; these fish were found in a half rotten state and were infected with cholera.

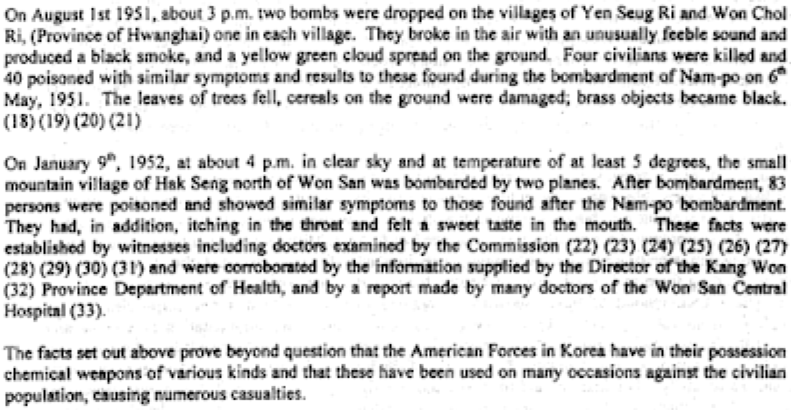
2.) Chemical Weapons: On various occasions since May 6th, 1951, American planes used asphyxiating and other gases or chemical weapons as follows:



According to evidence given to the Commission by the Head of the Health Section of Nampo City People's Committee (1) on the 6th May 1951, the city was bombarded four times, between 5.05 p.m. and 6.30pm The bombardments took place in good weather and in a temperature of 23 degrees Centigrade 13 districts were attacked. In the course of the last attack when the inhabitants had taken shelter, 3 B29s attacked the districts of Sam Hwa Hoopo Ri, Yong Chong Ri, Chook Dong Ri and a of Yong Soo Ri, over an area of 0.3 square k.m. with gas bombs. There re 1,379 casualties of whom 480 died of suffocation and 647 others were affected by gas. By other means during the raid, 76 people were killed and 176 injured.

The evidence of eye witnesses and of experts (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) taken by the colourless; the smoke had a disagreeable smell, resembling the smell of chlorine; its poisonous effect lasted until it evaporated, within about two hours; people in the shelters (including many children) were particularly affected. The symptoms of the victims were described as follows: Difficulty in breathing, hoarse voice, fainting, coughing, watering of the eyes, running nose, headache, feeling exhausted, the skin feeling hot, vomitting, spitting foam and blood, fever, cyanosis, feeble pulse, the symptoms of acute bronchitis and photophobia. Examination of blood showed an augmentation of white and red corpuscles and of haemoglobin from 100 to 115 %. Post-mortem examination showed an augmentation of volume and weight of the lungs which carried on the periphery marks of the ribs, and a red-black liquid mixed with exudates flowed out of the parenchyma. The surface of the bronchial tubes became clear grey in colour and came away easily. The kidneys and the heart showed signs of loss of blood, and points caused by dilation of the capillary structure; the meninges were smoothened and their structures dilated; the spinal marrow which was dissected showed ecchymoses in the white matter. When the Commission was in Nampo, it examined the results of the autopsy.

In the affected area of the city it was noted that grass became yellow brown, objects containing an alloy of copper became blue green and rings of silver became black. The Commission saw some of these articles identified by witnesses.



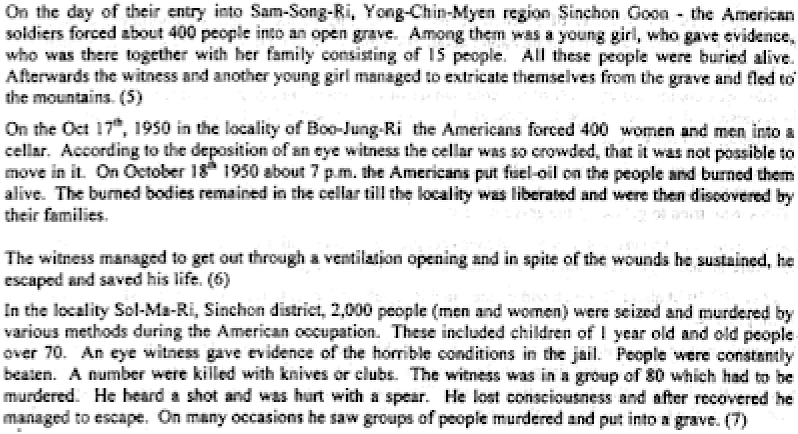
On August 1st 1951, about 3 p.m. two bombs were dropped on the villages of Yen Seug Ri and Won Chol Ri, (Province of Hwanghai) one in each village. They broke in the air with an unusually feeble sound and produced a black smoke, and a yellow green cloud spread on the ground. Four civilians were killed and 40 poisoned with similar symptoms and results to these found during the bombardment of Nam-po on 6th May, 1951. The leaves of trees fell, cereals on the ground were damaged; brass objects became black. (18) (19) (20) (21)

On January 9th, 1952, at about 4 p.m. in clear sky and at temperature of at least 5 degrees, the small mountain village of Hak Seng north of Won San was bombarded by two planes. After bombardment, 83 persons were poisoned and showed similar symptoms to those found after the Nam-po bombardment. They had, in addition, itching in the throat and felt a sweet taste in the mouth. These facts were established by witnesses including doctors examined by the Commission (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) and were corroborated by the information supplied by the Director of the Kang Won (32) Province Department of Health, and by a report made by many doctors of the Won San Central Hospital (33).

The facts set out above prove beyond question that the American Forces in Korea have in their possession chemical weapons of various kinds and that these have been used on many occasions against the civilian population, causing numerous casualties.

In the first attack on Nampo City, there were 1,379 casualties of which 480 died of suffocation and 647 others were affected by gas.

3.) Mass Massacres: According to witnesses, the commander of the U.S. Forces in the region of Sinchon by the name of Harrison ordered the mass killing of 35,383 civilians (19,149 men and 16,234 women) during the period between October 17th and December 7th, 1950. The civilians were pushed into a deep open grave, doused with fuel oil and set on fire. Those who tried to escape were shot. In another case, on October 20th, 2015, 500 men, women and children were forced into an air raid cave shelter located in the city of Sinchon. Harrison ordered American soldiers to put explosives into the shelter and seal it with sacks of earth prior to the fuse being lit. During The Second World War, the United Kingdom lost 0.94% of its population, France lost 1.35%, China lost 1.89% and the US lost 0.32%. During the Korean War, the DPRK lost more than 25% of its population. The population of North Korea was of the order of 8-9 million in 1950 prior to the Korean War. US sources acknowledge 1.55 million civilian deaths in North Korea, 215,000 combat deaths. MIA/POW 120,000, 300,000 combat troops wounded. South Korean military sources estimate the number of civilian deaths/wounded/missing at 2.5 million, of which some 990,900 are in South Korea. Another estimate places Korea War total deaths, civilian plus combat at 3.5 million.) Here are other examples of mass murders:



On the day of their entry into Sam-Song-Ri, Yong-Chin-Myen region Sinchon Goon - the American soldiers forced about 400 people into an open grave. Among them was a young girl, who gave evidence, who was there together with her family consisting of 15 people. All these people were buried alive. Afterwards the witness and another young girl managed to extricate themselves from the grave and fled to the mountains. (5)

On the Oct 17th, 1950 in the locality of Boo-Jung-Ri the Americans forced 400 women and men into a cellar. According to the deposition of an eye witness the cellar was so crowded, that it was not possible to move in it. On October 18th 1950 about 7 p.m. the Americans put fuel-oil on the people and burned them alive. The burned bodies remained in the cellar till the locality was liberated and were then discovered by their families.

The witness managed to get out through a ventilation opening and in spite of the wounds he sustained, he escaped and saved his life. (6)

In the locality Sol-Ma-Ri, Sinchon district, 2,000 people (men and women) were seized and murdered by various methods during the American occupation. These included children of 1 year old and old people over 70. An eye witness gave evidence of the horrible conditions in the jail. People were constantly beaten. A number were killed with knives or clubs. The witness was in a group of 80 which had to be murdered. He heard a shot and was hurt with a spear. He lost consciousness and after recovered he managed to escape. On many occasions he saw groups of people murdered and put into a grave. (7)

There is also an officially released document from a "top secret" member of gov't which confirms that the South Korean gov't backed by the US during the cold war, forced 400,000+ ppl into "virtual concentration camps" in 1951, supposedly to "prevent conscription by communists". You can view the document here, straight from the CIA's website. There is also a photo of it below:

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: 17-Feb-2010

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24 May 51
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"B" KOREA. Communist Offensive Turned Back Along Entire Front. [redacted] the second attack of the Communists' 5th Phase Offensive "ended in failure" due to heavy casualties. [redacted] large scale withdrawal on all fronts, although enemy activity in the east is not yet entirely clear. It is believed that the Communists will be incapable of resuming the offensive for a period of from 8 to 10 days. ([redacted] 24 May 51).

"C" KOREA. Manpower Scandal in the ROK. According to press accounts, the ROK Ministry of Health on 22 May released statistics for the month of April on health conditions among the more than 400,000 South Korean men once held in "training camps" in South Korea. These figures revealed the death of 13,000 conscripts in April due to disease as well as hunger and extreme malnutrition in over 200,000. Apparently much of the blame for maltreatment of these men rests on the shoulders of officers of the now-disbanded National Guard. ([redacted] 22 May 51) COMMENT: Prior to the 2nd Communist capture of Seoul in January, the ROK Government rounded up all men of military age and sent them south under guard to prevent their conscription by the Communists. The men were held in virtual concentration camps in the south and no ROK Government agency would accept full responsibility for their maintenance. Some 250,000 of the 400,000 were recently released. It is believed that this scandal was a factor in the recent ROK Cabinet turnover and may also account for the current high degree of legislative indignation against President Rhee.

"C" KOREA. Reorganized Chinese Communist Units may be on Western Front. A Chinese Communist soldier, captured north of Seoul on 22 May, identified his unit as the 1st. Cavalry Regiment, Independent Cavalry Division. The prisoner stated that his troop was attached to the Chinese Communist 38th Army for reconnaisance and also that the 38th Army was to attack. [redacted] further clarification and confirmation of this information must be received before accepting it. ([redacted] 24 May 51). COMMENT: Although very sketchy, this report lends credence to previous reports of an unidentified army group to the rear of the 19th Army Group on the western front. While it was previously believed that this force might be elements of the 2nd Army Group, this report may indicate that the reorganized 12th Army Group (38th, 39th, and 40th Armies, long in Korea and presently out of contact) is in reserve on the western front.

[redacted]

NR

4.) Attacks on Civilians: Prior to the Korean War, the capital city of North Korea, Pyongyang, had a population of 464,000. As a result of the war, the population had fallen to 181,000 by December 31, 1951. In the period between June 27, 1950 and the Commission's visit, more than 30,000 incendiary and explosive devices were dropped on the city, destroying 64,000 out of 80,000 houses, 32 hospitals and dispensaries (despite the fact that they were marked with a red cross), 64 churches, 99 schools and university buildings. Extensive crimes were committed by US forces in the course of the Korean War (1950-1953). While nuclear weapons were not used during the Korean War, what prevailed was the strategy of "mass killings of civilians" which had been formulated during World War II. A policy of killing innocent civilians was implemented through extensive air raids and bombings of German cities by American and British forces in the last weeks of World War II. In a bitter irony, military targets were safeguarded. This unofficial doctrine of killing of civilians under the pretext of targeting military objectives largely characterised US military actions both in the course of the Korean war as well as in its aftermath. According to Bruce Cummings:

"On 12 August 1950, the USAF dropped 625 tons of bombs on North Korea; two weeks later, the daily tonnage increased to some 800 tons.U.S. warplanes dropped more napalm and bombs on North Korea than they did during the whole Pacific campaign of World War II."

The territories North of the 38th parallel were subjected to extensive carpet bombing, which resulted in the destruction of 78 cities and thousands of villages. Major General William F Dean "reported that most of the North Korean cities and villages he saw were either rubble or snow-covered wastelands". General Curtis LeMay [left] who coordinated the bombing raids against North Korea brazenly acknowledged that:

"Over a period of three years or so we killed off – what – twenty percent of the population. ... We burned down every town in North Korea and South Korea, too".

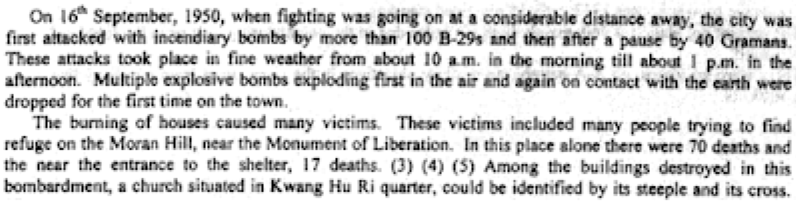
This was quoted in Brian Willson, Korea and the Axis of Evil, Global Research, October 2006. Brian Wilson, (no, not the mastermind behind the Beach Boys) an veteran, peace activist, and attorney has also said the following:

"It is now believed that the population north of the imposed 38th Parallel lost nearly a third its population of 8 – 9 million people during the 37-month long "hot" war, 1950 – 1953, perhaps an unprecedented percentage of mortality suffered by one nation due to the belligerence of another."

Extensive war crimes were also committed by US forces in South Korea as documented by the Korea Truth and Reconciliation Commission. According to ROK sources, almost one million civilians were killed in South Korea in the course of the Korean War:

"In the early days of the Korean War, other American officers observed, photographed and confidentially reported on such wholesale executions by their South Korean ally, a secretive slaughter believed to have killed 100,000 or more leftists and supposed sympathizers, usually without charge or trial, in a few weeks in mid-1950."

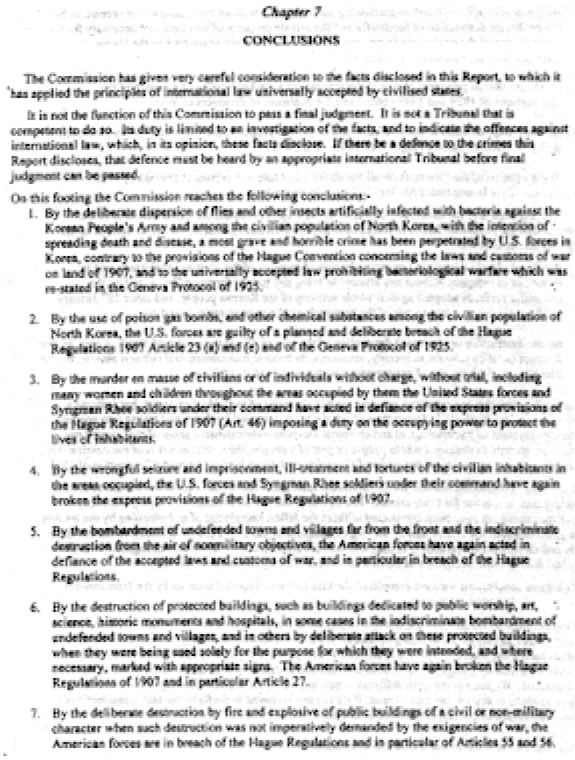
Below is a description of one of the aerial bombardments of Pyongyang:



On 16th September, 1950, when fighting was going on at a considerable distance away, the city was first attacked with incendiary bombs by more than 100 B-29s and then after a pause by 40 Gramans. These attacks took place in fine weather from about 10 a.m. in the morning till about 1 p.m. in the afternoon. Multiple explosive bombs exploding first in the air and again on contact with the earth were dropped for the first time on the town.

The burning of houses caused many victims. These victims included many people trying to find refuge on the Moran Hill, near the Monument of Liberation. In this place alone there were 70 deaths and the near the entrance to the shelter, 17 deaths. (3) (4) (5) Among the buildings destroyed in this bombardment, a church situated in Kwang Hu Ri quarter, could be identified by its steeple and its cross.

Here is the conclusion of the Commission:



Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS

The Commission has given very careful consideration to the facts disclosed in this Report, to which it has applied the principles of international law universally accepted by civilised states.

It is not the function of this Commission to pass a final judgment. It is not a Tribunal that is competent to do so. Its duty is limited to an investigation of the facts, and to indicate the offences against international law, which, in its opinion, these facts disclose. If there be a defence to the crimes this Report discloses, that defence must be heard by an appropriate international Tribunal before final judgment can be passed.

On this footing the Commission reaches the following conclusions:-

1. By the deliberate dispersion of flies and other insects artificially infected with bacteria against the Korean People's Army and among the civilian population of North Korea, with the intention of spreading death and disease, a most grave and horrible crime has been perpetrated by U.S. forces in Korea, contrary to the provisions of the Hague Convention concerning the laws and customs of war on land of 1907, and to the universally accepted law prohibiting bacteriological warfare which was re-stated in the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

2. By the use of poison gas bombs, and other chemical substances among the civilian population of North Korea, the U.S. forces are guilty of a planned and deliberate breach of the Hague Regulations 1907 Article 23 (a) and (e) and of the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

3. By the murder en masse of civilians or of individuals without charge, without trial, including many women and children throughout the areas occupied by them the United States forces and Syngman Rhee soldiers under their command have acted in defiance of the express provisions of the Hague Regulations of 1907 (Art. 46) imposing a duty on the occupying power to protect the lives of inhabitants.

4. By the wrongful seizure and imprisonment, ill-treatment and tortures of the civilian inhabitants in the areas occupied, the U.S. forces and Syngman Rhee soldiers under their command have again broken the express provisions of the Hague Regulations of 1907.

5. By the bombardment of undefended towns and villages far from the front and the indiscriminate destruction from the air of nonmilitary objectives, the American forces have again acted in defiance of the accepted laws and customs of war, and in particular in breach of the Hague Regulations.

6. By the destruction of protected buildings, such as buildings dedicated to public worship, art, science, historic monuments and hospitals, in some cases in the indiscriminate bombardment of undefended towns and villages, and in others by deliberate attack on these protected buildings, when they were being used solely for the purpose for which they were intended, and where necessary, marked with appropriate signs. The American forces have again broken the Hague Regulations of 1907 and in particular Article 27.

7. By the deliberate destruction by fire and explosive of public buildings of a civil or non-military character when such destruction was not imperatively demanded by the exigencies of war, the American forces are in breach of the Hague Regulations and in particular of Articles 55 and 56.

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8. By the confiscation without requisitioning authority, and without compensation or receipt, or by the deliberate destruction of foodstuffs and the private property of civilians, not necessary for the maintenance of the occupying forces, the American troops have again broken the Hague Regulations and in particular Articles 46 and 52.

9. By the murder of prisoners of war, American troops have been guilty of a breach of the Conventions of 1929 and 1949 concerning the treatment of Prisoners of War.

10. By the pillage of historic works of arts, and of private property, the American forces have been guilty of offences against Hague Regulations (Art. 47).

In the opinion of the Commission all the above constitute war crimes as defined by Article 6 of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal of Nuremberg.

Having regard to the extent and character of the crimes revealed, the Commission is of the opinion that the American forces in Korea been guilty of crimes against humanity as defined by the erg Charter, as follows:-

1. By the wholesale destruction or extermination of sections of the civilian inhabitants, and in particular of refugees without any attempt to bring any to trial for any offence, and by the terroristic methods adopted against whole sections of the Korean people, and since 28th January 1952 by the use on a large scale of the bacteriological weapons against civilians;

2. By the destruction or attempted destruction of the way of life of the people of North, Korea, by the destruction of its schools, university, museums, its historic monuments and cultural objects, by the destruction of the organs of government and the murder of its officials.

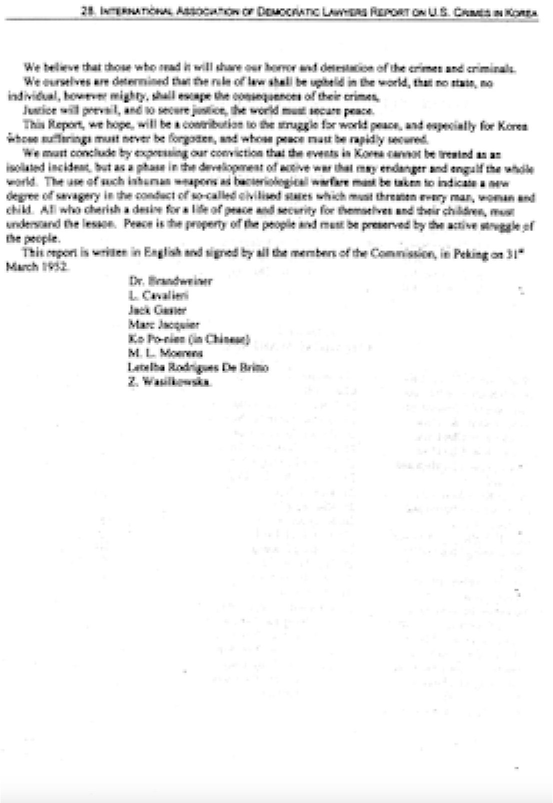
Taking the view that the extensive murders are not the result of individual excesses, but indicate a pattern of behaviour by the U.S. forces throughout the areas occupied by them, and taking into account that the employment of bacteriological and chemical weapons over extensive areas of the country must constitute an attempt to destroy a whole people or part of a people, the Commission is of the opinion that the American forces are guilty of the crime of Genocide as defined by the Genocide Convention of 1948.

In the light of these conclusions, the Commission must name those who should be brought to the bar of world justice to answer for these crimes. The Commission has no hesitation in saying that many of these crimes could not have been committed without the fullest knowledge of and planning by the leaders of the government of the U.S.A. and of the High Command of the U.S. Forces. It therefore indicts these people and all officers commanding in the field who are responsible for these crimes together with all individual soldiers who accepted and carried out orders contrary to international law.

With these conclusions we have completed the task that was imposed upon us by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers.

We feel bound to say that our experiences in Korea, in the conduct of our investigation have filled us with horror and dismay at the savagery revealed. We know that there are many, who, like some of ourselves before our journey, will find it difficult to accept the terrible facts established in this Report. We therefore solemnly pledge our honour as lawyers and as ordinary men and women to the truth of the facts disclosed. We have come from different countries, we do are a common religion, a common political outlook, or even a common tongue. We have endeavoured to perform our task conscientiously and with full regard to our responsibilities as lawyers.

This Report, the result of our labours, is unanimous.



28. INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS REPORT ON U.S. CRIMES IN KOREA

We believe that those who read it will share our horror and detestation of the crimes and criminals.

We ourselves are determined that the rule of law shall be upheld in the world, that no state, no individual, however mighty, shall escape the consequences of their crimes,

Justice will prevail, and to secure justice, the world must secure peace.

This Report, we hope, will be a contribution to the struggle for world peace, and especially for Korea whose sufferings must never be forgotten, and whose peace must be rapidly secured.

We must conclude by expressing our conviction that the events in Korea cannot be treated as an isolated incident, but as a phase in the development of active war that may endanger and engulf the whole world. The use of such inhuman weapons as bacteriological warfare must be taken to indicate a new degree of savagery in the conduct of so-called civilised states which must threaten every man, woman and child. All who cherish a desire for a life of peace and security for themselves and their children, must understand the lesson. Peace is the property of the people and must be preserved by the active struggle of the people.

This report is written in English and signed by all the members of the Commission, in Peking on 31st March 1952.

Dr. Brandweiner
L. Cavalieri
Jack Gaster
Marc Jacquier
Ko Po-nien (in Chinese)
M. L. Moerens
Letelba Rodrigues De Britto
Z. Wasilkowska.

The IADL Commission unanimously found that the United States was guilty of crimes against humanity during the Korean War and that there was a pattern of behaviour which constitutes genocide.

REPORT: U.S. DROPPED PLAGUE-INFECTED FLEAS IN NORTH KOREA IN MARCH 1952: REVIEWING THE LONG-SUPPRESSED REPORT

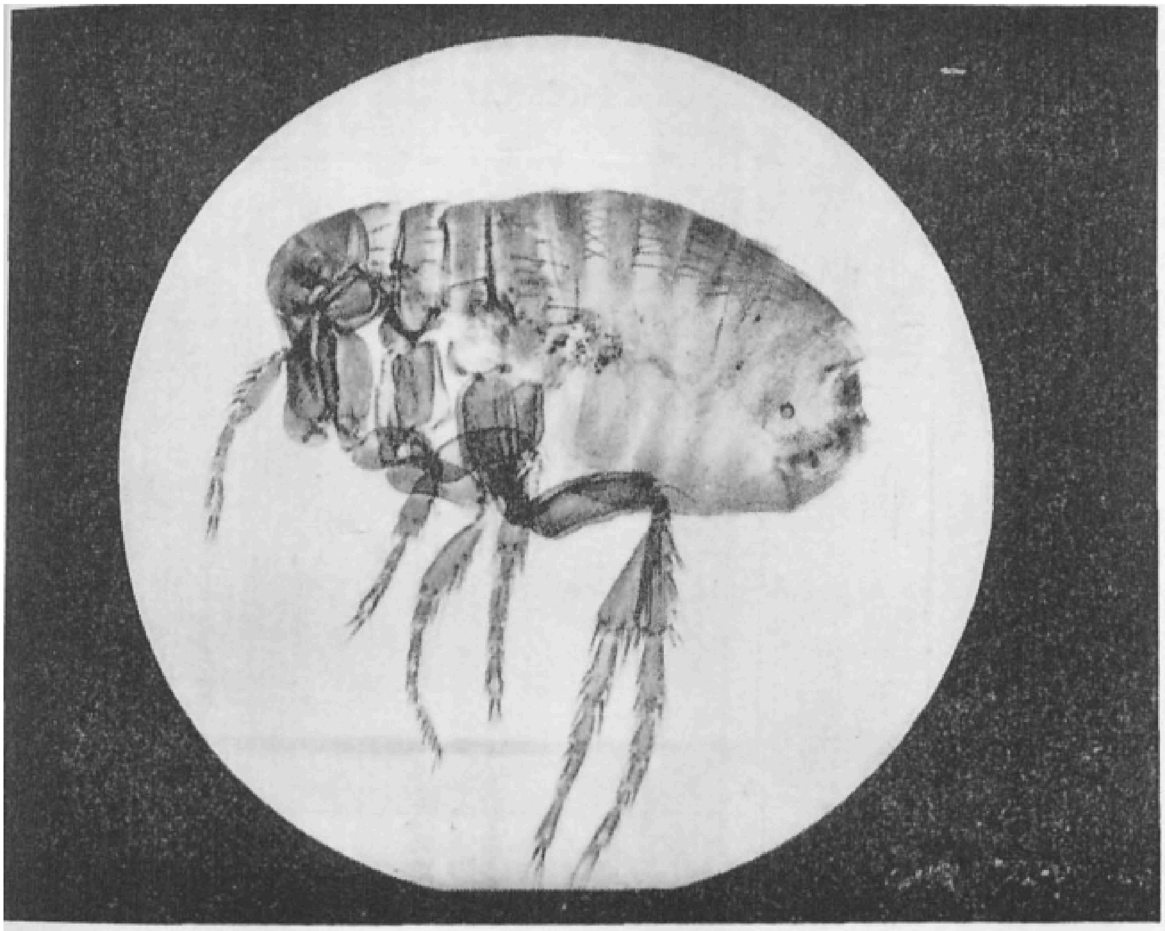


Fig. 1. *Pulex irritans* disseminated by an American plane at Song-Dong, Hoi-Yang Goon, Korea.

Image from International Scientific Commission ("Needham") Report, pg. 317 (p. 354 of linked PDF below)

There is a great deal of misunderstanding between the people of the United States and North Korea. This is largely due to the lack of information the average U.S. citizen has about the suffering endured by Koreans during the Korean War, including war crimes committed by U.S. forces. While U.S. forces carpet bombed North Korea, bombed irrigation dams, and threatened nuclear attack, their most controversial action was the use of bacteriological or biological weapons during the war. For decades, the U.S. has strenuously denied the use of such weapons. At the same time, evidence of such use was kept from the American people. Even today, very few are aware of what really happened. Only in February 2018 was a full documentary report on the U.S. use of germ warfare during the Korean War, prepared and written by mostly West European scientists 66 years ago, released online in easy-to-read format. Written largely by the most prestigious British scientist of his day, this official report, containing hundreds of pages of evidence about the use of US biological weapons during the Korean War, was effectively suppressed upon its original release in 1952. Courtesy of researcher Jeffrey Kaye, INSURGE now publishes the report in text-searchable format for the first time for the general public, with an exclusive, in-depth analysis of its damning findings and implications. The report provides compelling evidence of systematic violation of the laws of war against North Korea through the deployment of biological weapons — a critical context that is essential for anyone to understand the dynamics of current regional tensions, and what might be done about them.

Back in the early 1950s, the U.S. conducted a furious bombing campaign during the Korean War, dropping hundreds of thousands of tons of ordnance, much of it napalm, on North Korea. The bombardment, worse than any country had received up to that point, excepting the effects of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, wiped out nearly every city in North Korea, contributing to well over a million civilian deaths. Because of the relentless bombing, the people were reduced to living in tunnels. Even the normally bellicose Gen. MacArthur claimed to find the devastation wreaked by the U.S. to be sickening (Robert M. Neer, Napalm: An American Biography, 2013, Belknap Press, pg. 100). Some former Cold War researchers have maintained that China, the Soviet Union, and North Korea perpetrated a fraud in their claims of germ warfare. They rely on a dozen or so documents supposedly found by a rightwing Japanese journalist in Soviet archives. But these researchers never counted on the fact that someday the public could read documentary accounts of the biowar campaign for themselves. Both North Korea and China have alleged that by early 1952, the US was using biological or germ warfare weapons against both North Korea and China. The U.S. government has strenuously denied this. Nevertheless, captured U.S. flyers told their North Korean and Chinese captors about the use of such weapons. Later, after the prisoners were returned to U.S. custody, counterintelligence experts and psychiatrists interrogated them. They were told under the threat of court martial to renounce their confessions about germ warfare. They all did so. The Army Criminal Investigative Division officer in charge of interrogating returning prisoners, including airmen who confessed to use of biological weaponry on North Korea and China, was Army counter-intelligence specialist, Col. Boris Pash. Pash had previously been in charge of security for the most sensitive classified operations of the U.S. government in World War II. He was in charge of security at the Manhattan Project’s Berkeley Radiation Laboratory.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, military intelligence officer Pash led the Alsos Mission, which searched for Nazi and Italian nuclear scientists and fissionable materials, as well as gathering “intelligence about any enemy scientific research applicable to his military effort,” including biological and chemical weapons. Later, Pash worked for the CIA, and in the 1970s was called before Congressional investigators concerning his alleged participation in Agency assassinations (“Boris Pash and Science and Technology Intelligence,” Masters of the Intelligence Art series, U.S. Army Intelligence Center, Ft. Huachuca, undated. URL: http://huachuca-www.army.mil/files/History_MPASH.PDF (retrieved 1/20/2018)). To convince the world of the truth of their claim the U.S. had dropped biological weapons on their countries, and after turning down the suggestion that the International Red Cross look into the charges, the North Koreans and Chinese sponsored an investigating commission. Using the auspices of the World Peace Council, they gathered together a number of scientists from around the world, most of whom were sympathetic to either the Left or the peace movement. Most surprisingly, this commission, which came to be known as the International Scientific Commission, or ISC, was headed by one of the foremost British scientists of his time, Joseph Needham.

The ISC included scientists from a number of countries, including Sweden, France, Italy, and Brazil. The Soviet Union representative, Dr. N. N. Zhukov-Verezhnikov had been the chief medical expert at the Khabarovsk Trial of the Unit 731 Japanese officers accused of participating in bacteriological (aka biological, or germ) warfare before and during World War II, as well as conducting hideous experiments on prisoners to further that aim. Zhukov-Verezhnikov went on to write scientific articles through the 1970s. Needham himself, though pilloried in the Western press for his opinions on the controversy of U.S. use of biological weapons during the Korean War, remained a highly lauded scientist for years after the ISC report. He was elected a fellow of the British Academy in 1971. In 1992, the Queen conferred on him the Companionship of Honour (See URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Needham (retrieved 1/20/18). The article drew the information from Winchester, Simon (2008), The Man Who Loved China: The Fantastic Story of the Eccentric Scientist Who Unlocked the Mysteries of the Middle Kingdom. New York: HarperCollins). The ISC travelled to China and North Korea in the summer of 1952 and by September produced the “Report of International Scientific Commission for the Investigation of the Facts Concerning Bacterial Warfare in Korea and China,” which corroborated the Chinese and North Korean claims that the U.S. had used biological weapons in an experimental fashion on civilian populations.

The summary report was only some 60 pages long, but the ISC included over 600 pages of documentary material comprising statements from witnesses, including airmen involved in dropping the weaponry, as well as captured enemy agents; reports from doctors; journal articles from the United States; autopsy reports and lab tests; and photos and other materials. Most of this documentary material has been all but inaccessible for decades, with only a handful of copies of the ISC report in a few scattered libraries in the United States. The report concluded that the U.S. had used a number of biological weapons, including use of anthrax, plague, and cholera, disseminated by over a dozen of different devices or methods, including spraying, porcelain bombs, self-destroying paper containers with a paper parachute, and leaflet bombs, among others. This section is not meant to examine the full range of opinions or evidence about whether or not the U.S. used biological weapons in the Korean War - it is instead an attempt to publish essential documentation of such claims, documentation that has effectively been withheld from the American people, and the West in general, for decades.

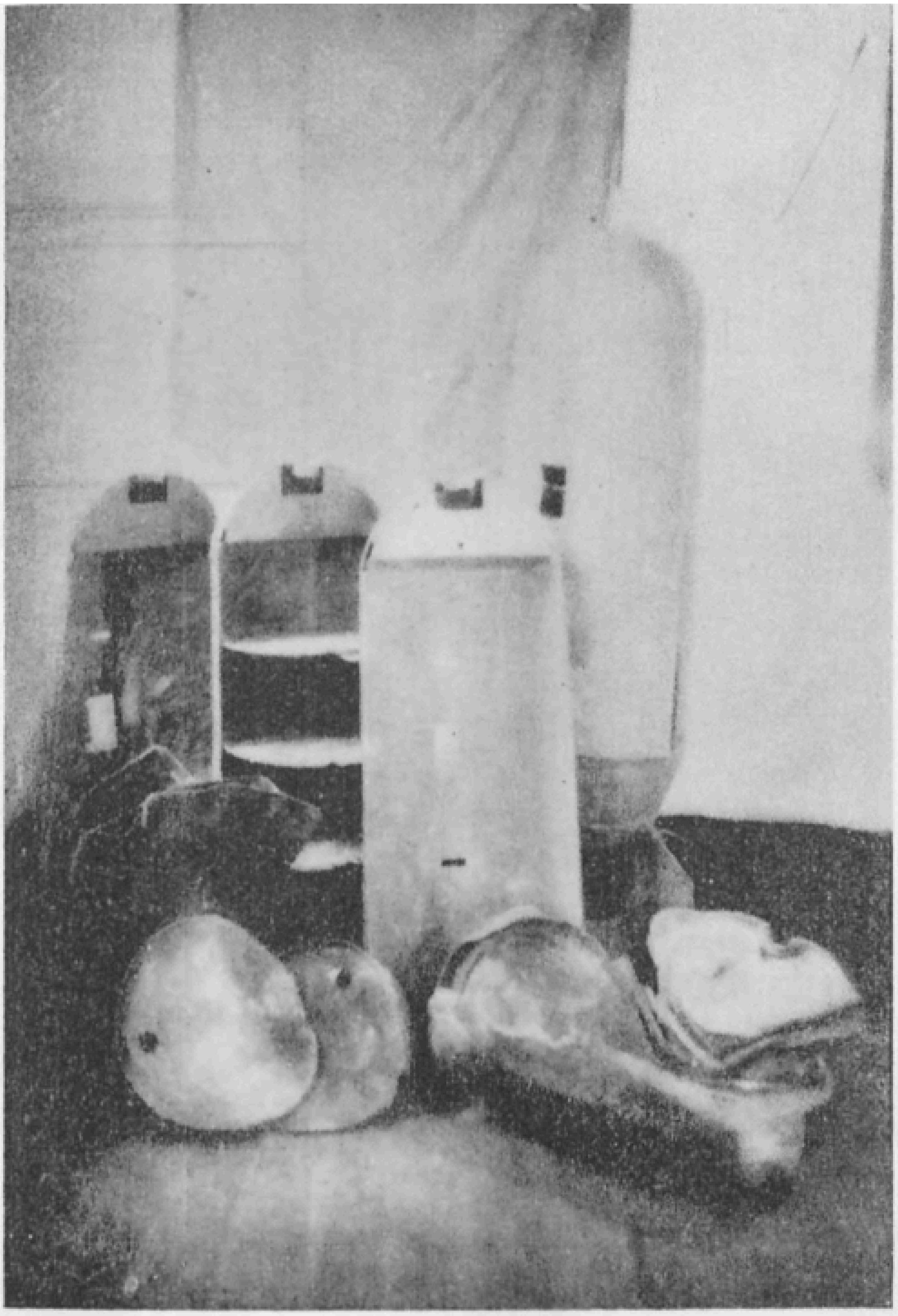
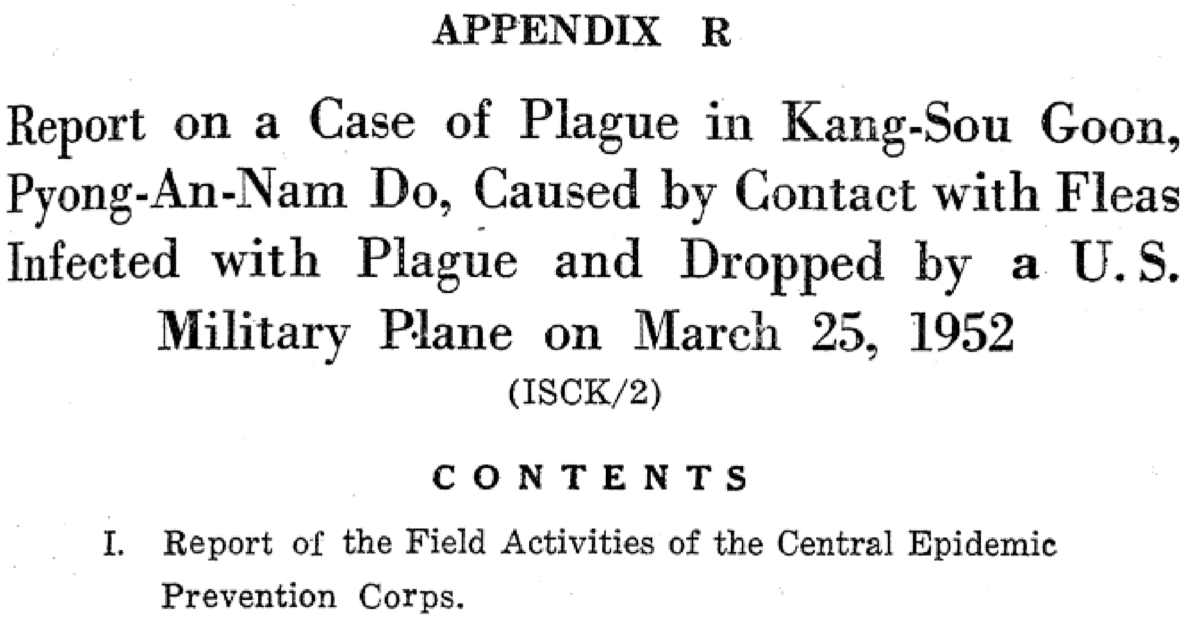


Fig. 1. Four-chambered bacterial bombs (leaflet bombs) dropped by American planes at Ta-Wai-Tsu Hamlet, Chia-Tsai-Shui Village, Ch'ang-Pai Hsien, Liaotung Province.

From ISC Report, pg. 403

The story referred to earlier that follows concerns one such episode, the dropping of plague-infected human fleas on a single small village. But we will see that the story itself is much larger, and includes a U.S. cover-up about Japan's use of biological weapons in World War II, and testimony from a Marine Corps colonel about how the U.S. conceptualized its germ warfare campaign.



APPENDIX R

Report on a Case of Plague in Kang-Sou Goon, Pyong-An-Nam Do, Caused by Contact with Fleas Infected with Plague and Dropped by a U.S. Military Plane on March 25, 1952

(ISCK/2)

CONTENTS

I. Report of the Field Activities of the Central Epidemic Prevention Corps.

Excerpted from the 1952 "Report of the International Scientific Commission for the Investigation of the Facts Concerning Bacterial Warfare in Korea and China," p. 287 (p. 325 of linked PDF)

The tale begins with an American plane repeatedly circling over a small North Korean village one moonless night in Spring 1952. It was early Tuesday morning in the village of Kang-Sou, in South Pyongan Province. Song Chang-Won, a 32-year old peasant farmer had gone to his neighbor's house one morning to ask him a farming-related question. The date was March 25, 1952, and the country had been rent by war and invasion for exactly nine months now. Of much concern to North Koreans were the recent reports of American planes dropping plague and other germs over the country. The government had recently begun extraordinary efforts to contain the outbreak of epidemics. Weeks earlier, on February 22, North Korea's Foreign Minister, Bak Hun-Yung had officially protested the use of bacteriological warfare by the United States. On March 8, Chou En-Lai, Foreign Minister for the People's Republic of China, made international headlines when he sent a telegram to the "Secretariat to the United Nations detailing claims of 448 germ warfare sorties by the US Air Force."

Song's neighbor was Pak Yun-Ho, a 26 year old peasant born and raised in the village. He had never travelled far from home. Unusually, Pak had been up for hours already. As he later told authorities, he was woken up by what he (and later others) identified as an American plane that had been circling above the village around 4:00am. "The enemy plane flew away after circling several times without strafing or bombing. I couldn't sleep again after this," Pak told local investigators. A few hours later he went to the nearby village well to wash his face. It was

6:00am and light was just gathering for the day. The well or small pond the peasants used was about a football field away from the cluster of small homes among which Pak lived. Arriving there, he was shocked to find “dozens of fleas floating on the surface of water in a water jar” a few yards east of the well. Pak had filled the jar with fresh water only the night before. He was “surprised” at the sight of the fleas. He had heard about the claims of U.S. germ warfare in the country. Only a few weeks before, he had received a cholera-typhoid-paratyphoid-dysentery mixed vaccine, part of an intense public health campaign by North Korean authorities, following the germ warfare attacks. He knew he had to report what he’d seen. Hurrying back home, Pak ran into his neighbor Song, and took him to see the fleas. Song went to see the large jar, which had a nearly 20 inch (50 cm) opening on top. The fleas looked dark brown, and indeed they were floating on top of the water. The jar itself was surrounded by a good deal of grass and weeds. A North Korean peasant villager gives testimony to the ISC, from video.
Pak told interviewers, “Song Chang-Won and I thought that these numerous fleas floating on the surface of water must have been dropped by the American plane circling over our village before dawn. We, therefore, immediately informed the chairman of the Village People’s Committee of this incident.”

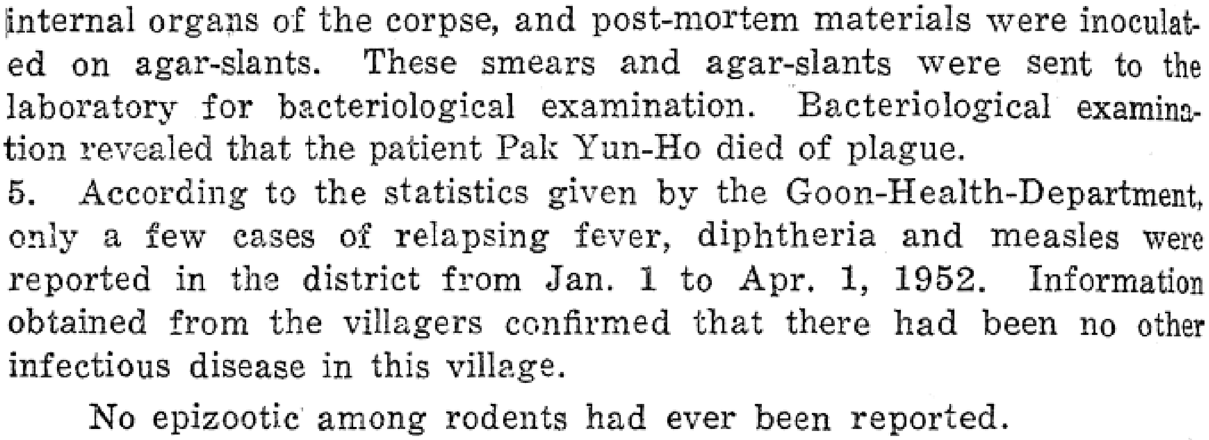
The Mobile Epidemic Prevention Corps

The chairman brought the information to the local branch of the newly formed Mobile Epidemic Prevention Corps. As elsewhere, public health exigencies took precedence over forensic concerns, and most of the fleas were destroyed immediately. Even so, some of the fleas were gathered using sterile means and saved for later examination. By noon that day, three members of the Mobile Epidemic Prevention Corps were onsite, investigating the strange flea phenomenon. They, too, found “dozens of fleas” floating on the water. Using sterile procedures, twenty fleas were placed into test tubes and sent to the Central Sanitary and Epidemic Prevention Station for examination. The remaining fleas were burned and then buried. The area around the well and the vicinity was disinfected with 6% hexachlorane and 3% phenol. Rats were hunted, trapped and destroyed, because rats were believed to be carriers of bubonic plague, as during Europe’s infamous Black Death. No rats were found that carried plague. (Interestingly, only this year has scientific evidence been published showing the rat-plague connection is most likely false.) Inoculations against plague were administered to all the villagers, but it would turn out to be too late for Pak Yun-Ho.

No one saw any fleas falling from the sky, but everyone assumed they originated from the circling American plane. Neither was any projectile or device found that may have delivered the fleas, even though apparently there hadn’t been much of a search (or perhaps the fleas had been sprayed out of the plane, as we shall see had been the case in Japan’s use of plague in World War II). Health officials’ energies went into disinfecting Pak’s house and all the other houses in the village. The district was quarantined. All told, 936 people lived in Kang-Sou.

Public health officials had heard about previous attacks of plague in the country. These infections all seemed to follow the path of American planes. The case seemed open and shut. North Korea had not had any history of bubonic plague for 500 years prior to 1952.

Six days after he discovered the fleas, Pak developed symptoms of plague. On the morning of April 2, he started to feel ill. He felt weak and suffered from chills and severe headache. He developed a high fever. Pak went to see the doctor, who prescribed him Sulfadiazine, a common antibiotic used for plague at the time. He had a sister with him in the village. Perhaps she cared for him. He had suffered from malaria only the summer before. That night, Pak could barely sleep. His temperature rose to 104 degrees fahrenheit. He had little appetite, but was quite thirsty. The doctor kept him on Sulfadiazine, and placed him on a glucose IV.



internal organs of the corpse, and post-mortem materials were inoculated on agar-slants. These smears and agar-slants were sent to the laboratory for bacteriological examination. Bacteriological examination revealed that the patient Pak Yun-Ho died of plague.

5. According to the statistics given by the Goon-Health-Department, only a few cases of relapsing fever, diphtheria and measles were reported in the district from Jan. 1 to Apr. 1, 1952. Information obtained from the villagers confirmed that there had been no other infectious disease in this village.

No epizootic among rodents had ever been reported.

Portion of report from Chief, Mobile Epidemic Prevention Corps, in ISC report, pg. 288

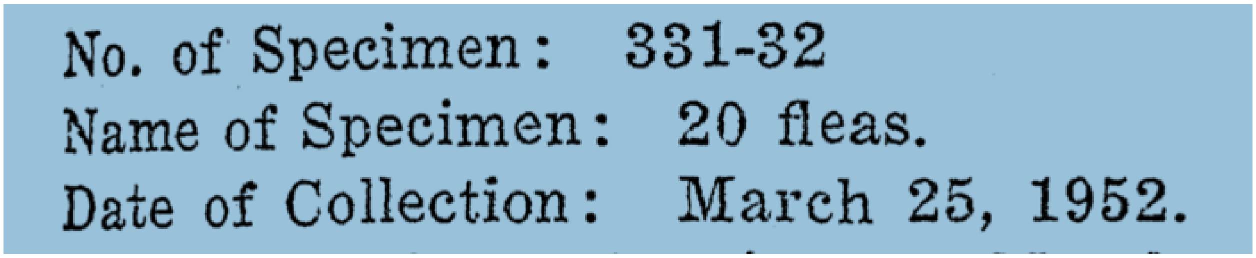
By the afternoon of April 4, Pak was failing. Delirious, he drifted in and out of consciousness. His lips were turning blue. His vomit was greenish-yellow, and the lymph nodes in his groin were swollen and quite painful. That night, his body temperature started to rapidly fall. He died shortly before midnight. While many efforts were taken to blunt any effects from the presumed U.S. bacterial warfare attack, medical examiners determined that the young peasant from Kang-Sou died from septicemia, secondary to bubonic plague spread by fleas dropped from the American airplane. At least, this was the conclusion of the scientists who investigated the aftermath of this and other attacks.

The International Scientific Commission

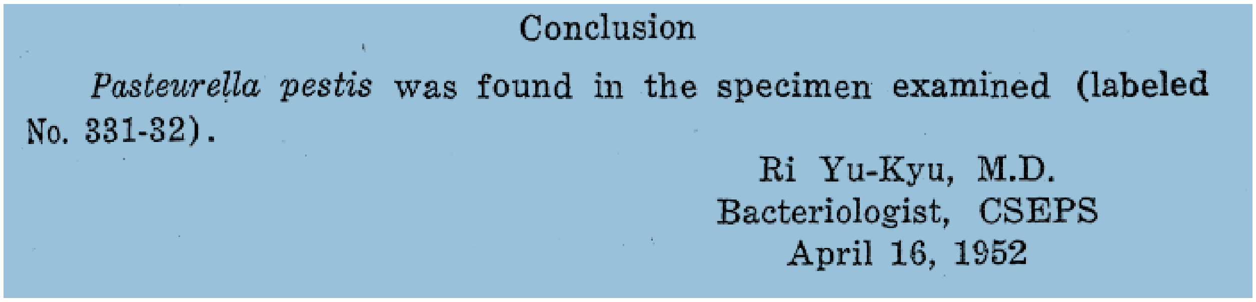
By April 16, the laboratory reports confirmed what all suspected. The fleas Pak found were human fleas (Pulex irritans), accumulated in a strange and unnatural way. The bacteria isolated from them, as well as from Pak's tissues after autopsy, was Pasteurella pestis, which causes plague. Pasteurella pestis is more commonly referred to today as Yersinia pestis, after Alexandre Yersin, who first linked the bacillus to plague. In September 1952, the International Scientific Commission for the Investigation of the Facts Concerning Bacterial Warfare in Korea and China (ISC) issued a report finding that the U.S. had conducted biological warfare during the Korean War. The ISC linked Pak's death to the discovery of plague-laden fleas in his village. His death was one piece in the chain of evidence in the case proving U.S. germ warfare.

The report noted: “Since the beginning of 1952 numerous isolated foci of plague have appeared in North Korea, always associated with the sudden appearance of numbers of fleas and with the previous passage of American planes. Seven of these incidents, the earliest dating from 11th Feb., were reported in SIA/1, and in six of them the presence of the plague bacteria in the fleas was demonstrated. Document SIA/4 added the statement that after a delivery of fleas to the neighbourhood of An-Ju on the 18th Feb., fleas which were shown bacteriologically to contain *Pasteurella pestis*, a plague epidemic broke out at Bal-Nam-Ri in that district on the 25th. Out of a population of 600 in the village, 50 went down with plague and 36 died.”

The ISC report states that “SIA/1”was the “First Report of the Korean Medical Service,” while “SIA/4” was the “International Democratic Lawyers’ Commission (Korea) Report.” The ISC also described another important instance of fleas carrying plague. A few months after the Kang-Sou incident, on April 23, two young lieutenants from the Chinese Volunteer Forces in Korea went back to pick up some wood they had cut the day before on a bare hillside outside Hoi-Yang, in the Song Dong district of North Korea. They were very surprised to find “a very dense mass of fleas” in the same spot that was clear the day before. The only change was that in the very early morning hours, around 4:00 am, an American plane had been spotted circling the area. The ISC scientific experts noted acerbically: “According to what is known of the oecology of this insect [the human flea], it would be impossible to find large numbers away from the houses of man. What, then, is to be said of the occurrence of a number of these insects estimated at many tens of thousands, at one time, on bare waste land remote from any human habitation? Such a witches’ sabbath was certainly not called together by any natural means.”



No. of Specimen: 331-32
Name of Specimen: 20 fleas.
Date of Collection: March 25, 1952.



Conclusion

Pasteurella pestis was found in the specimen examined (labeled No. 331-32).

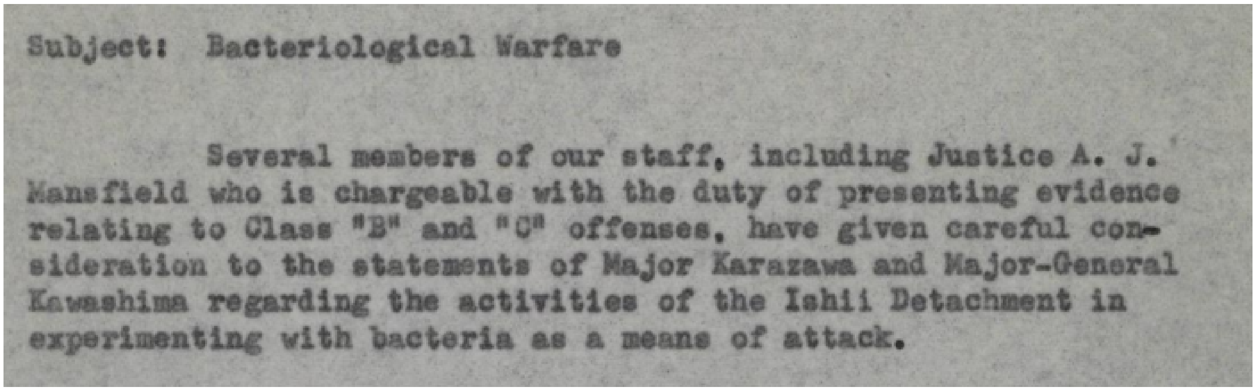
Ri Yu-Kyu, M.D.
Bacteriologist, CSEPS
April 16, 1952

From report on bacteriological specimen, reproduced in ISC report, pp. 297–299

Charged with investigating the situation in the immediate aftermath of Pak's discovery of the Kang-Sou fleas, the medical investigators in Kang-Sou had no actual experience with plague. Plague was unknown in their area. So they were relieved when Dr. Ch'en Wen-Kuei, the President of the Southwest Branch of the Chinese Medical Association came to the village to assist investigators there. He had been assigned recently to the Ministry of Health and Epidemic Prevention Service of Korea.

Imperial Japan Used Plague as Weapon in China

Dr. Ch'en knew a good deal about plague. He was the author of a 1941 report for Kuomintang authorities detailing a germ warfare attack by Japan's biological warfare department, Unit 731, on the Chinese town of Changteh, in Hunan. He had plenty of experience with both plague and the experience of being attacked by biological weapons. As in Kang-Sou, in Changteh there had been no plague bomb either. In that attack, however, eyewitnesses saw "wheat and rice grains, pieces of paper, cotton wadding" sprayed by air from a plane. Plague in the area developed within a few weeks. In Hunan province, almost 500 or so were to die from this and similar attacks.



Subject: Bacteriological Warfare

Several members of our staff, including Justice A. J. Mansfield who is chargeable with the duty of presenting evidence relating to Class "B" and "C" offenses, have given careful consideration to the statements of Major Karazawa and Major-General Kawashima regarding the activities of the Ishii Detachment in experimenting with bacteria as a means of attack.

From Dec. 13, 1946 memorandum from Frank Tavenner, Chief Prosecutor, IMTFE, to Soviet Major-General A. N. Vasilyev, concerning possible prosecution of Unit 731 for use of biological weapons (link)

After World War II, Ch'en's report was subsequently filed with The International Military Tribunal For The Far East (IMTFE), which conducted war crime trials of Japanese military and civilian authorities. In a controversial decision by the chief prosecutor for the IMTFE, Frank Tavenner, no evidence on biological warfare charges was allowed in the postwar war crimes trials. Supposedly this was because prosecutors could not link the germ warfare crimes to anyone who was specifically on trial. But in actuality, the U.S. had made a secret agreement with Japan's biological warfare experts not to prosecute them if they gave all their data and expertise to U.S. biological warfare and intelligence departments. Looking now at the evidence first found by Pak Yun-Ho, Dr. Ch'en concluded that the Korean and Chinese scientists were correct in identifying the Kang-Sou incident as a plague attack. ISC investigators recounted his testimony: "The whole picture in the case of this peasant-farmer was identical not only with that of those where the Japanese disseminated fleas infected with Pasteurella pestis between 1940 and 1944, but also with that of several other places in the northern part of Korea in 1952 where plague fleas suddenly appeared in large numbers after the passage of American planes.... The phenomena of 1952 were, in his opinion, on a considerably larger scale than anything which the Japanese had ever attempted."

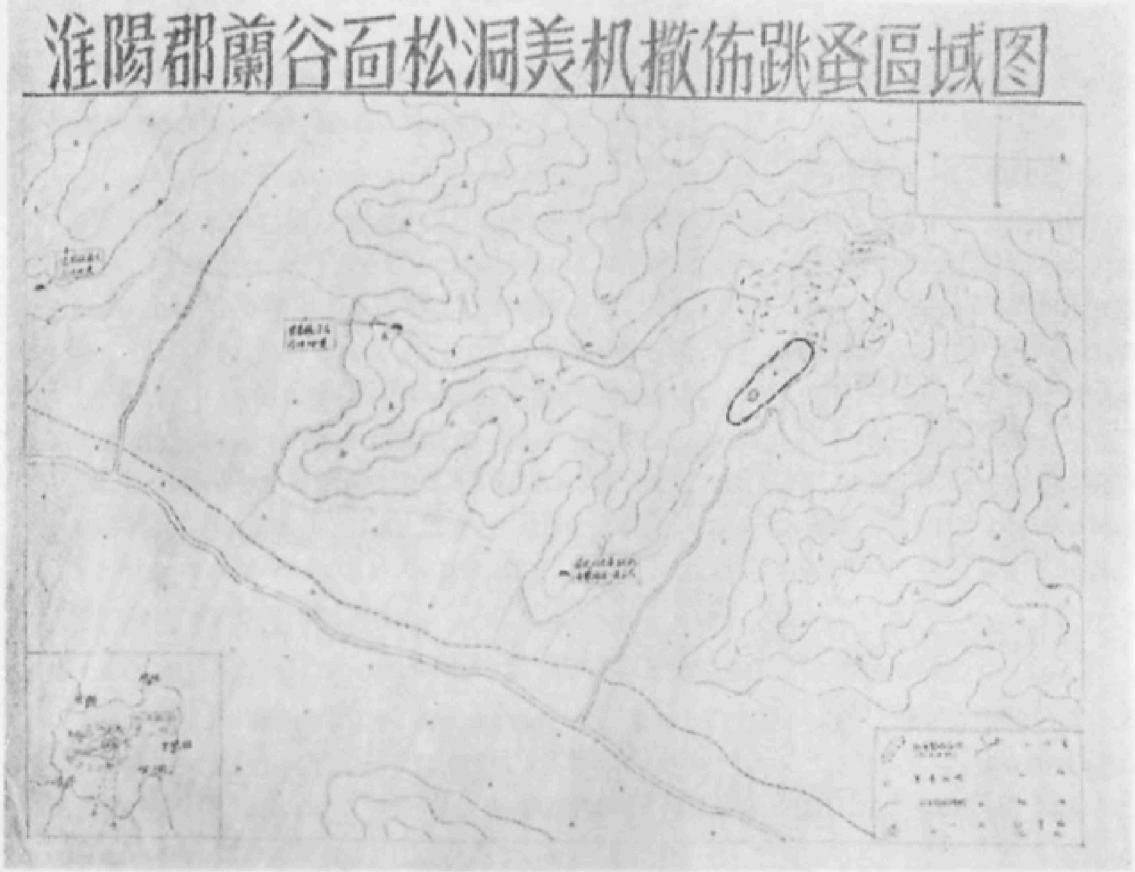


Fig. 2. Field map showing the position of the swarm of fleas disseminated by an American military plane at Song-Dong, Hoi-Yang Goon.

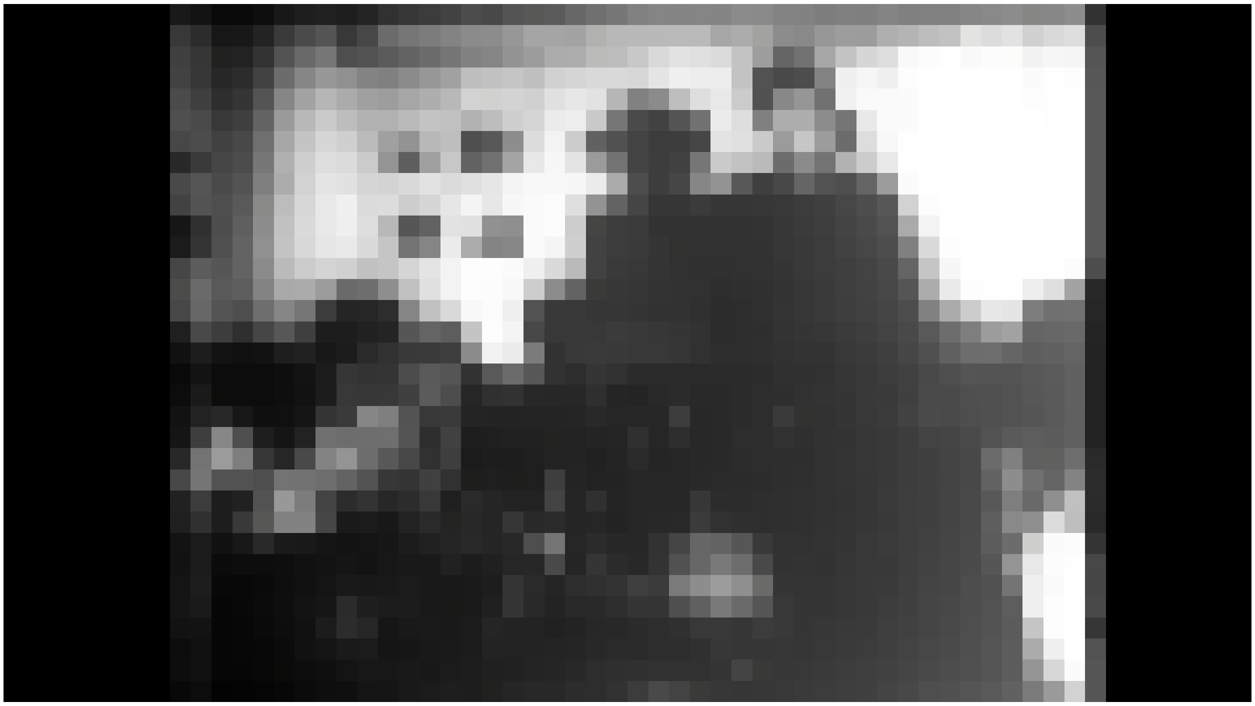
Image from International Scientific Commission (“Needham”) Report, pg. 318 (p. 355 of linked PDF)

Dr. Ch’en further described to investigators the method behind Japan’s use of plague: “The Japanese system was to send planes to drop the fleas early morning, and then to keep up a desultory air bombardment all day for the purpose of confining the population to the shelters. When they returned to their homes in the evening, the concentrations of fleas would have dispersed and nothing untoward would be noticeable.” In the case of the North Korean village, there was no bombing later in the day. In fact, at this point the U.S. biowar campaign was apparently experimental in nature.

A Top Marine Officer Presented a Biowar Timeline

According to a statement by Colonel Frank Schwable, Chief of Staff of the First Marine Aircraft Wing, given to Chinese interrogators after his plane was shot down in on July 8, 1952, “The general plan for bacteriological warfare in Korea was directed by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff in October, 1951.... The basic objective was at that time to test, under field conditions, the various elements of bacteriological warfare, and to possibly expand the field tests, at a later date, into an element of the regular combat operations, depending on the results obtained and the situation in Korea.” Schwable continued, “Terrain types to be tested included high areas, seacoast areas, open spaces, areas enclosed by mountains, isolated areas, areas relatively adjacent to one another, large and small towns and cities, congested cities and those relatively spread out.... All possible methods of delivery were to be tested as well as tactics developed to include initially, night attack and then expanding into day attack by specialized squadrons.” It wasn’t until May 24, 1952 that, according to Col. Schwable, “General Barcus, Commanding General, 5th Air Force... directed General Jerome to extend the bacteriological warfare conducted by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing into its operational stage.” It would appear that much of what seems strange about the early months of the U.S. biological warfare campaign was due to its provisional, experimental nature.

It would appear that much of what seems strange about the early months of the U.S. biological warfare campaign was due to its provisional, experimental nature.



Lt. Floyd B. O'Neal talks about his participation in germ warfare attacks before International Scientific Commission investigators, early Aug. 1952 at unidentified site in North Korea, from a video capture (link)

There is a great deal more evidence surrounding the use of U.S. bacteriological weapons during the Korean War, including both the evidence collected by the International Scientific Commission, led by British scientist Joseph Needham, and in a number of statements given both to interrogators, but also publicly (see videos here and here) by captured U.S. airmen. Today, even as the Trump administration moves towards putative negotiations with the North Koreans over "denuclearlization" of the Korean peninsula, President Trump has been appointing new cabinet and national security officials, such as Mike Pompeo and John Bolton, who have advocated an extremely hawkish stance towards North Korea. Now is the time for the full truth to come out about the history of the United States in the Korean peninsula, so that the forces of peace can wage their own struggle with those who seek disastrous war.

The charges of U.S. use of biological warfare during the Korean War have long been the subject of intense controversy. The reliance, in part, on testimony from U.S. prisoners of war led to U.S. charges of "brainwashing." These charges later became the basis of a cover story for covert CIA experimentation into use of use of drugs and other forms of coercive interrogation and torture that became the basis for its 1963 KUBARK manual on interrogation, and much later, a powerful influence on the CIA's post-9/11 "enhanced interrogation" program. Establishment Cold War scholars have been quick to debunk the ISC report. The most notable attempts in recent years included the publication of purported letters written by officials of the Soviet Union discussing the lack of evidence of U.S. biological warfare, and the decision to manufacture such evidence to fool the West (Leitenberg, Milton. (1998). Resolution of the Korean War Biological Warfare Allegations. Critical reviews in microbiology. 24. 169–94. 10.1080/10408419891294271). Subsequently, a 1997 memoir by Wu Zhili, the former director of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army Health Division, was published declaring the purported U.S. use of bacteriological agents in the Korean War was really "a false alarm" ("Wu Zhili, 'The Bacteriological War of 1952 is a False Alarm'," September, 1997, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Yanhuang chunqiu no. 11 (2013): 36–39. Translated by Drew Casey. https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/123080).

As two Canadian scholars who spent years researching the Chinese-North Korean claims of biological warfare have noted, if these documents were to be true, then it would go against the bulk of archival evidence, including interviews with pertinent witnesses in both the United States and China ("False Alarm? The Bacteriological War of 1952 — Comment on Director WuZhili's Essay" by Stephen Endicott and Edward Hagerman, Department of History, York University (ret.), June 2016, http://www.yorku.ca/sendicot/On%20WuZhili-false-alarm.pdf). Some of this archival evidence is quite recent, including the CIA declassification of a good deal of formerly top secret daily signal intelligence cables from the Korean War ("Baptism By Fire: CIA Analysis of the Korean War Overview," URL: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/baptism-fire-cia-analysis-korean-war-overview). The cables dealing with North Korean claims of biological warfare, which claims were dismissed by U.S. officials, prove that the North Koreans were serious about the belief they were being attacked by germ weapons, and that they were concerned that reports from the field not be falsified by assiduous if uninformed people sending in reports from the field. There is no evidence that North Korean officials or personnel ever engaged in falsification of evidence of biological warfare.

There also is plenty of archival evidence to be found in the suppressed Needham report materials. For instance, the Wu Zhili document claims, "'for the entire year [1952–1953] no sick patient or deceased person was found to have anything to do with bacteriological warfare."

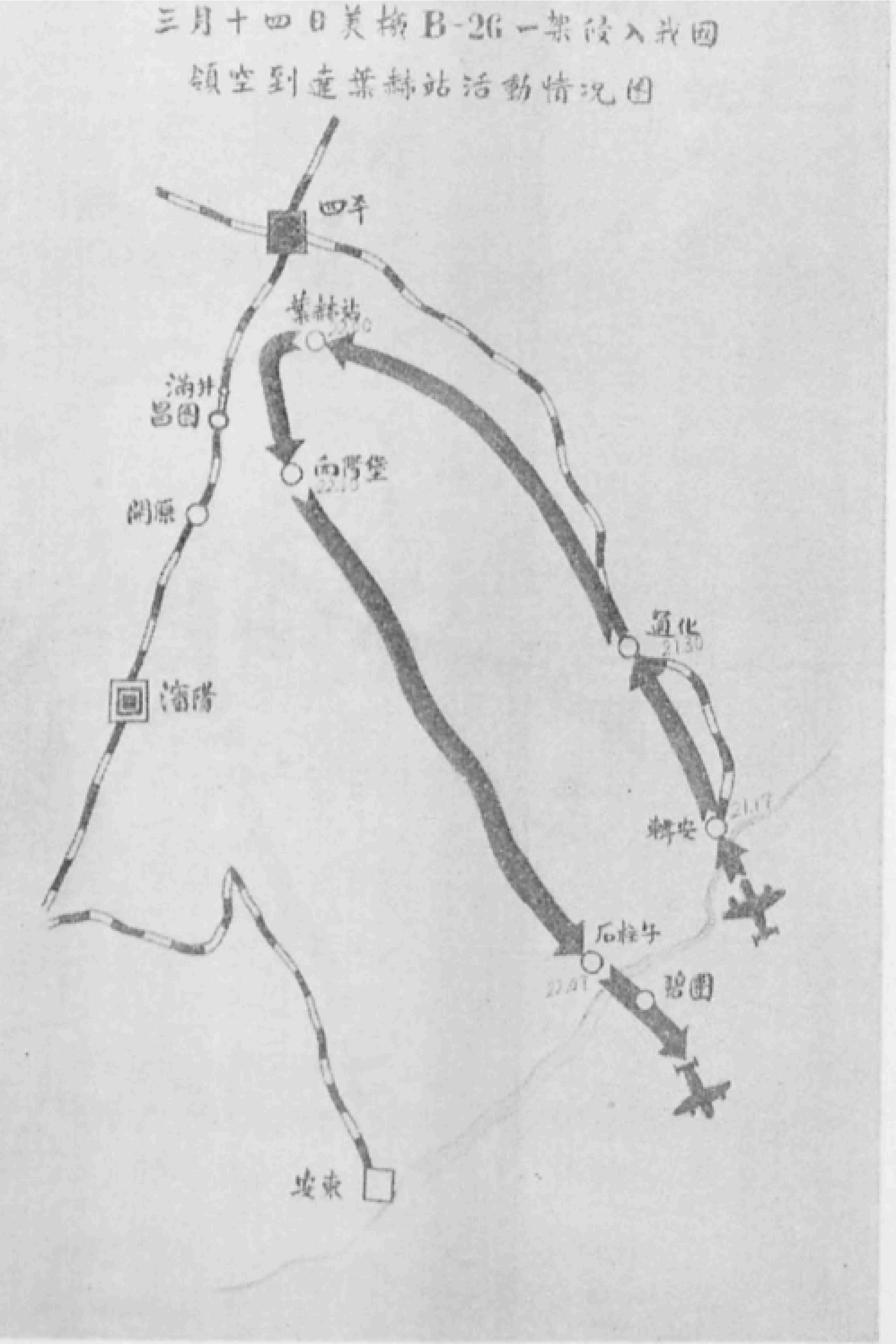

三月十四日美機B-26一架侵入我国
領空到達葉赫站活動情况图
四平
葉赫站
满井
昌图
開原
南營堡
瀋陽
通化
21:30
輯安
21:17
石柱子
22:47
碧團
安東

Fig. 4. Chart showing the course of an American plane B-26 intruding over Ssu-Ping and Man-Ching on March 14, 1952.

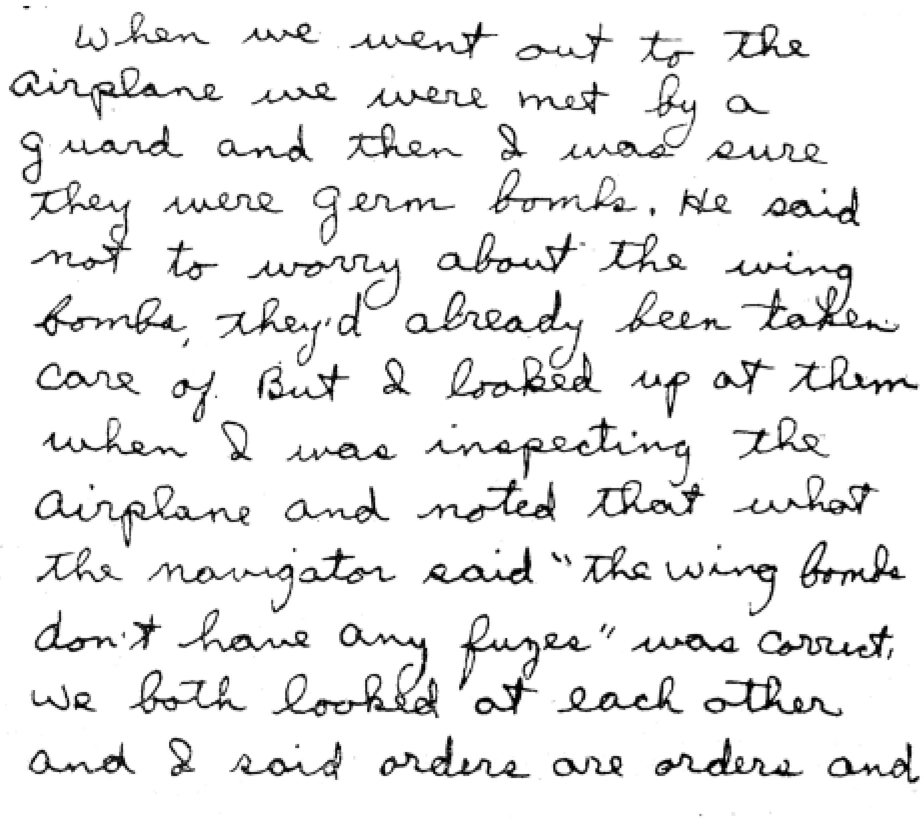
From the ISC report, pg. 470

But the ISC report documents a number of such deaths, including deaths from inhalational anthrax, a very rare disease almost completely unknown in China at that time. Appendix AA of the report, "Report on the Occurrence of Respiratory Anthrax and Haemorrhagic Anthrax Meningitis following the Intrusion of U.S. Military Planes over Northeast China" details the presence of anthrax by autopsy and laboratory examination in five deaths during March-April 1952. According to U.S. experts who have looked at the details of this report, the conclusions regarding death from inhalational anthrax could not have been faked (For a full discussion, see "Updated: The Suppressed Report on 1952 U.S. Korean War Anthrax Attack," https://valtinsblog.blogspot.com/2017/04/revealed-suppressed-report-on-1952-us.html). Until recently, there has been no effort to make the original Needham materials available for other scholars or the public to assess for themselves the truth or falsity of their analysis. Last year, scholar Milton Leitenberg uploaded a copy of the ISC report to Scribd, but it is a very rough scan, and not searchable, or easy to use for the public. The release was not advertised and the public in particular remains ignorant of its findings.

Censorship of Unit 731-U.S. Collaboration on Biological Warfare Data

One important part of the ISC report guaranteed its suppression in the United States after its initial publication. The report discussed the activities of Imperial Japan's biological warfare detachment, Unit 731, and the U.S. interest in its activities. Back in 1952, collaboration between the U.S. and Japanese war criminals using biological weapons was top secret, and totally denied by the U.S. But today, even U.S. historians accept that a deal was made between the U.S. and members of Unit 731 and associated portions of the Japanese military that had in fact been experimenting on the use of biological weapons since the mid-1930s, experimentation that included use of human vivisection and barbaric torture of thousands of human beings, most of whom were disposed of in crematoria. In addition, as described in the book chapter by Bernd Martin noted in the bibliography, there was collaboration between the Japanese and the Nazi regime on these issues. The U.S. collaboration with Japanese war criminals of Unit 731 was formally admitted in 1999 by the U.S. government, though the documentation for this confession wasn't published until nearly 20 years later (Jeffrey S. Kaye, "Department of Justice Official Releases Letter Admitting U.S. Amnesty of Japan's Unit 731 War Criminals," Medium.com, May 14, 2017, URL: https://medium.com/@jeff__kaye/department-of-justice-official-releases-letter-admitting-u-s-amnesty-of-unit-731-war-criminals-9b7da41d8982). It is a matter of historical record now that the U.S. government granted amnesty to Japan's chief at Unit 731, doctor/General Shiro Ishii and his accomplices. The amnesty was kept top secret for decades, until revealed by journalist John Powell in a landmark article for the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists in October 1981.

What came to be known as the Needham report, due to the fact the ISC was headed by the prestigious British scientist, came under immediate fire upon release. The report still remains a flashpoint for scholars. A 2001 article by the UK's Historical Association detailed how UN and UK government officials collaborated in attempts to debunk the ISC findings. The UK Foreign Office released memoranda saying that claims of Japanese bacteriological warfare, going back to 1941, were "officially 'not proven.'" (See article by Tom Buchanan in Bibliography.) The sensitivity of the material uncovered by the ISC touched two areas of covert US government research. First was the US government's own plans to research and possibly implement germ warfare. The second issue concerned the confessions of U.S. flyers as to how they were briefed and implemented trial runs of biological warfare during the Korean War. China published the confessions of 19 U.S. airmen, but those confessions are also notoriously difficult to obtain. The ISC report published herein does include some of those "confessions," and the public can be allowed to decide for themselves how authentic or genuine they are.



When we went out to the
airplane we were met by a
guard and then I was sure
they were germ bombs. He said
not to worry about the wing
bombs, they'd already been taken
care of. But I looked up at them
when I was inspecting the
airplane and noted that what
the navigator said "the wing bombs
don't have any fuzes" was correct.
We both looked at each other
and I said orders are orders and

From testimony of Lt. J. Quinn, ISC report, pg. 614 (PDF)

The U.S. claimed that the flyers were tortured, and the CIA promoted the idea they were "brainwashed" by diabolical methods, causing a scare about "commie" mind control programs and "menticide," which they used to justify the expenditure of millions of dollars for U.S. mind control programs during the 1950s-1970s. The programs, codenamed Bluebird, Artichoke, and MKULTRA, among others, used experiments on unwitting civilians, as well as soldiers undergoing supposed anti-torture training at the military's SERE schools. I have shown via public records that CIA scientists continued to use experiments on "stress" at SERE schools after 9/11, and believe such research included experiments on CIA and/or DoD held detainees. That such research did take place can be inferred from the release in November 2011 of a new set of guidelines concerning DoD research. This newest version of a standard instruction (DoD Directive 3216.02) contained for the first time a specific prohibition against research done on detainees. I believe a strong case can be made that while coercive methods, primarily isolation, was used on the U.S. prisoners of war who later confessed, that their confessions were primarily true. The idea that only false confessions result from torture is in fact false itself. While false confessions can result from torture (as well as less onerous methods, such as the Reid Technique, used by police departments throughout the United

States today), actual confessions can also sometimes occur. I have first-hand experience working with torture survivors to know that is true. Even so, it is a fact that all the POWs who confessed use of germ warfare later recanted that upon return to the United States. But the terms of their recantations are suspect. The recantations were made under threat of courts-martial, and after interrogations by U.S. counterintelligence agents and psychiatrists. The archival evidence of the flyers debriefings have been destroyed or lost due to fire (according to the government). Meanwhile at least one scientist working at Ft. Detrick at the time admitted to German documentary investigators before he died that the U.S. had indeed been involved in germ warfare in Korea. (See the documentary video, "Code Name: Artichoke.").

An "actual investigation… could do us psychological as well as military damage"

The charges of U.S. use of biological weapons during the Korean War are even more incendiary than the now-proven claims the U.S. amnestied Japanese military doctors and others working on biological weapons who experimented on human subjects, and ultimately killed thousands in operational uses of those weapons against China during the Sino-Japanese portion of World War Two. The amnesty was the price paid for U.S. military and intelligence researchers to get access to the trove of research, much of it via fatal human experiments, the Japanese had developed over years of studying and developing weapons for biological warfare. During the Korean War, the U.S. strenuously denied charges of use of germ weapons and demanded an international investigation through the United Nations. The Chinese and North Koreans derided such offers, as it was United Nations-sanctioned forces that were opposing them in war and bombing their cities. But behind the scenes, the U.S. government initiated a campaign to impugn the ISC report, something they found difficult, as it turned out, according to a CIA-released document I revealed in December 2013. The document also showed the U.S. considered the call for a UN investigation to be mere propaganda (Jeffrey Kaye, "CIA Document Suggests U.S. Lied About Biological, Chemical Weapon Use in the Korean War," Shadowproof, Dec. 10, 2013).

At a high-level meeting of intelligence and government officials on July 6, 1953, U.S. authorities admitted behind closed doors that the U.S. was not serious about conducting any investigation into such charges, despite what the government said publicly. According to this document, the reason the U.S. didn't want any investigation was because an "actual investigation" would reveal military operations, "which, if revealed, could do us psychological as well as military damage." A "memorandum from the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) detailing this meeting specifically stated as an example of what could be revealed "8th Army preparations or operations (For the actual memorandum document, see URL: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80R01731R003300190004-6.pdf). Charges of chemical warfare by the Americans during the Korean War were part of a report by a Communist-influenced attorneys' organization visiting Korea, and their findings were dismissed as propaganda by U.S. authorities and commentators. But the PSB memo suggests perhaps they were right.

The Khabarovsk War Crimes Trial

The ISC report also references the December 1949 war crimes trial held by the USSR in Khabarovsk, not far from the Chinese border. The trial of Japanese war criminals associated with Units 731, 100 and other biological warfare divisions followed upon a near black-out of such issues at the larger Toyko war crimes trials held by the Allies a few years before. At the time of the Khabarovsk trial, U.S. media and government officials either ignored the proceedings, or denounced them as yet another Soviet "show trial." The Soviets for their part published the proceedings and distributed them widely, including in English. Copies of this report are easier to find for purchase used, though expensive, on the Internet. Additionally, in the last few years Google made a copy of the former Soviet volume available online (see Bibliography). But no scholarly edition has ever been published. Even so, U.S. historians have been forced over the years to accept the findings of the Khabarovsk court, though the general population and media accounts remain mostly ignorant such a trial ever took place. The fact the Soviets also documented the use of Japanese biological experiments on U.S. POWs was highly controversial, denied by the U.S. for decades, was a quite contentious issue in the 1980s-1990s. While a National Archives-linked historian has quietly determined such experiments did in fact take place, the issue has quietly fallen off the country's radar. (See L. G. Goetz in bibliography.)

The relevancy of these issues is of course the ongoing propaganda war between the United States and North Korea, as well as Pentagon reallocation of resources to the Asian theater for a possible future war against China. But it is the clear threat of a nuclear exchange between North Korea and the United States that calls for clarity around the issues that have led to the mistrust between the two countries. Such clarity demands the release of all information that would help the U.S. populace understand the North Korean point of view. Such understanding, and acting upon such knowledge, may be all that separates us from a catastrophic war that could potentially kill millions of people. The history behind the Korean War, and U.S. military and covert actions concerning China, Japan, and Korea, are a matter of near-total ignorance in the U.S. population. The charges of "brainwashing" of U.S. POWs, in an ongoing effort to hide evidence of U.S. biological warfare experiments and trials, also has become entwined in the propaganda used to explain the U.S. post-9/11 torture and interrogation program, and alibi past crimes by the CIA and Department of Defense for years of illegal mind control programs practiced as part of MKULTRA, MKSEARCH, ARTICHOKE, and other programs.

I hope that readers will feel free to disseminate this article without any copyright reservations, as well as the ISC report itself, an orphaned document from the Cold War.

A Minor Note: Frank H. Schwable

Frank H. Schwable was the highest ranking prisoner of war to confess in detail about the U.S. biological warfare campaign in North Korea and China during the Korean War. He describes in the three "confessions" or depositions below how that campaign evolved, what the men undertaking it felt about the campaign, the "effectiveness" of the use of bioweapons, and the security surrounding the covert use of bacteriological weapons. This unique document has been suppressed in the West for decades. Schwable, and others who also gave information on germ warfare to their captors, were said to be "brainwashed," tortured, and to have otherwise produced untruthful false confessions. After the war, Schwable and other prisoners who "confessed" were repatriated to the United States and threatened with court martial if they did not renounce their testimony. They all did so. Col. Schwable's statements regarding U.S. bacteriological warfare are posted here in the spirit of truthful inquiry and an airing of all facts. In the instance of fairness, and for purposes of historical analysis, Col. Schwable's written recantation of these statements is available for viewing here. Every reader will be able to compare this latter statement with what you have read about the details concerning the Korean War, both above and below. While critics of the premise of U.S. biological warfare in Korea cite the supposed coercion or torture of the captured airmen, few mention that upon repatriation they were subjected to a great deal of stress to recant. Upon Schwable's return, Marine Corps commandant, General Lemuel Shepherd, ordered the Colonel's appearance before a court of inquiry. Although in the end, Schwable received no formal disciplinary action, his military career was all but ended. Meanwhile, all the returning airmen who confessed to use of biological weapons were subjected to psychiatric evaluations and multiple interrogations after their return to U.S. military authorities. (See Raymond B. Lech, "Broken Soldiers", Univ. of Illinois Press, 2000 - While Lech is a proponent of the "menticide" view of how the North Koreans and Chinese treated their captives, this is maybe the most full account of what the returnees faced.)

Imperialism + The Ideological Influence of the Truman Doctrine

Historically, in the wake of World War II, the Truman doctrine first formulated by Foreign Policy adviser George F. Kennan in a 1948 State Department brief established the Cold War framework of US expansionism. What this 1948 document conveys is continuity in US foreign policy, from "Containment" during the Cold War era to "Pre-emptive" War. It states in polite terms that the US should seek economic and strategic dominance through military means:

Furthermore, we have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population. This disparity is particularly great as between ourselves and the peoples of Asia. In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. ***To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction.*** *(…)*

In the face of this situation we would be better off to dispense now with a number of the concepts which have underlined our thinking with regard to the Far East. We should dispense with the aspiration to "be liked" or to be regarded as the repository of a high-minded international altruism. We should stop putting ourselves in the position of being our brothers' keeper and refrain from offering moral and ideological advice. We should cease to talk about vague and—for the Far East—unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.

The planned disintegration of the United Nations system as an independent and influential international body has been on the drawing board of US foreign policy since the inception of the United Nations in 1946. Its planned demise was an integral part of the Truman doctrine as defined in 1948. From the very inception of the UN, Washington has sought on the one hand to control it to its advantage, while also seeking to weaken and ultimately destroy the UN system. In the words of George Kennan:

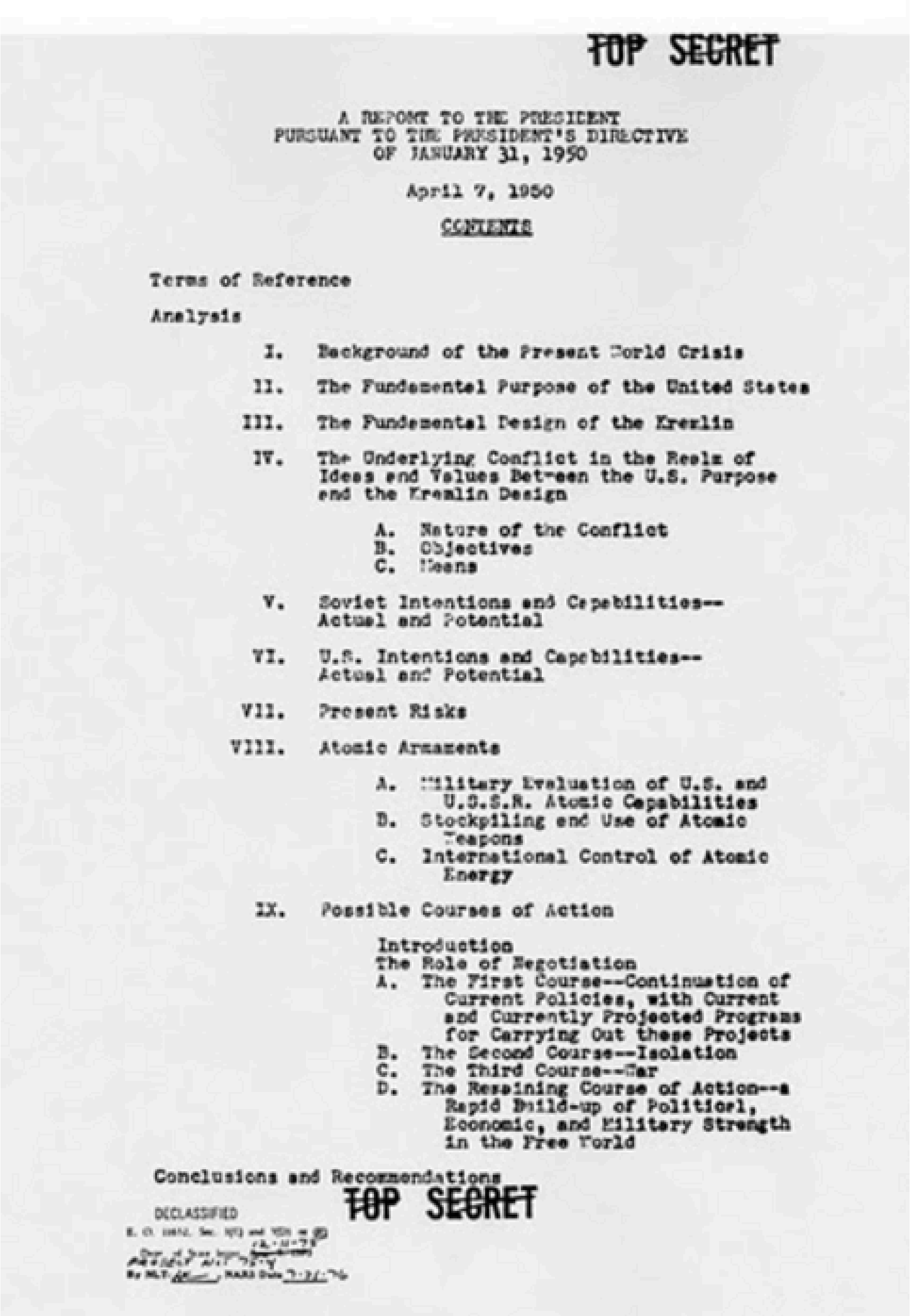
*"****Occasionally, it [the United Nations] has served a useful purpose. But by and large it has created more problems than it has solved, and has led to a considerable dispersal of our diplomatic effort. And in our efforts to use the UN majority for major political purposes we are playing with a dangerous weapon which may some day turn against us.*** *This is a situation which warrants most careful study and foresight on our part.*

***In our efforts to use the UN majority for major political purposes we are playing with a dangerous weapon which may someday turn against us. This is a situation which warrants most careful study and foresight on our part.*”**

Although officially committed to the “international community”, Washington has largely played lip service to the United Nations. In recent years it has sought to undermine it as an institution. Since Gulf War I, the UN has largely acted as a rubber stamp. It has closed its eyes to US war crimes, it has implemented so-called peacekeeping operations on behalf of the Anglo-American invaders, in violation of the UN Charter. The Truman doctrine was the culmination of a post World War II US military strategy initiated with the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 and the surrender of Japan. In East Asia it consisted in the post-war occupation of Japan as well the US takeover of Japan’s colonial Empire including South Korea (Korea was annexed to Japan under the 1910 Japan–Korea Annexation Treaty). Following Imperial Japan’s defeat in World War II, a US sphere of influence throughout East and SouthEast Asia was established in the territories of Japan’s “Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”. The US sphere of influence included the Philippines (a US possession occupied by Japan during World War II), Thailand (a Japanese protectorate during World War II), Indonesia (Occupied by Japan during World War II, became a US proxy State following the establishment of the Suharto military dictatorship in 1965). This US sphere of influence in Asia also extended its grip into France’s former colonial possessions in Indochina, including Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, which were under Japanese military occupation during World War II. America’s hegemony in Asia was largely based on establishing a sphere of influence in countries which were under the colonial jurisdiction of Japan, France and the Netherlands.

President Truman’s containment speech of March 1947, though focused on the Mediterranean - not Asia - nevertheless prefigured the U.S. response to Korean events in June 1950. As the Joint Chiefs of Staff recognized, even if Soviet advances in Greece and Turkey were thwarted, the USSR “may decide to accelerate expansion in the Far East, in order to gain control of those areas which outflank us in the Near and Middle East" (Quoted by Akira Iriye, The Cold War in Asia: A Historical Introduction (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. 156). A consistent Cold War principle was thus established: the interconnectedness of global events—falling dominoes, in short. Containing presumed Soviet moves in southern Europe was of a piece with containment in Asia. During the next two years U.S. policy came to embrace the idea that the so-called Yalta system—built on the assumption of post-war U.S.-Soviet cooperation—was no longer viable. In the Pacific that meant converting Japan into a security partner, with a bilateral peace treaty dependent on Japanese consent to the establishment of major U.S. military bases for the indefinite future, and secret arrangements for U.S. ships carrying nuclear weapons (see Walter LaFeber, The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations Throughout History (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), p. 295). As Walter LaFeber writes, democratizing Japan was not the primary objective of the U.S. occupation. “The highest objectives were, first, to use Japan as the hub of an open, multilateral capitalism in Asia; second, to contain communism; and third to reassure neighbors by keeping Japan orderly and controlled.” The secret agreements, recently discovered by the new DPJ government in Tokyo, regarded use of U.S. bases and passage for nuclear-armed ships, including the right of U.S. ships carrying nuclear weapons to enter Japanese ports. This “revival of Japanese militarism,” as the Chinese would call it then and later, invited a communist response, which came in the form of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance (see below) in February 1950. The treaty specified that the Soviet Union would come to China’s aid in the event of an attack by Japan “or any other State which should unite in any form with Japan in acts of aggression.” Thus was the Cold War line in the sand drawn, precluding Japanese neutralism in foreign policy and early normalization of relations with the PRC. The next major benchmark in the evolution of the Cold War in Asia was NSC-68, a secret study commissioned by President Truman and submitted for his approval in April 1950. The study provided the essential ideological dimension to U.S. policy (See Michael Yahuda, The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 2d rev. ed., p. 111 on NSC-68 as an ideological document).

This document, perhaps the most important statement of U.S. grand strategy in the entire Cold War, clarified that global instability, “even in the absence of the Soviet Union,” required a major U.S. military buildup and an activist response to Soviet machinations. NSC-68 had its internal critics—George Kennan, for instance, thought it wrong to establish national security strategy by way of doctrine—but it was a consensus document that provided benefits for all the players, notably the U.S. military. Yet it is important to understand that NSC-68 and other NSC studies around the same time, such as NSC 48 (1949), went beyond containment and recommendations for U.S. rearmament.



~~TOP SECRET~~

A REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT
PURSUANT TO THE PRESIDENT'S DIRECTIVE
OF JANUARY 31, 1950

April 7, 1950

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DECLASSIFIED

The full document can be found and read here

Of equal importance was the objective to preserve the global economic system that Bretton Woods had created—a liberal trading order in which U.S. exports could thrive and U.S. financial supremacy could be sustained. Ideologically, NSC-68 was the predictable outgrowth of an administration-wide conviction that the communist threat was global in scope, monolithic in structure, and largely "schematic" (Kennan's word) in intent. The declassified NSC studies of China are of a piece with public statements by U.S. leaders in seeing little to distinguish the

China threat from the Soviet threat—though with the exception that NSC experts did note the potential for Sino-Soviet differences to emerge.6 But on the whole, Kennan's early warnings about Stalin's foreign policy—warnings whose alarmist language he would later regret (See, for instance, the CNN interview with Kennan in May and June 1996)—found a receptive audience in Washington, and were easily transferable to concerns about a communist China. On the eve of the Korean War Chinese leaders had reached the same kinds of conclusions about US imperialism that US leaders had reached about China: an implacable threat, headed by people who would never agree to treat China on the basis of "equality and mutual benefit." The combination of Chinese communist suspicions and anger over US support of Chiang Kai-shek, on one hand, and Patrick Hurley's accusations of pro-communist sympathies among Foreign Service and State Department officers who served in China or on the China Desk, on the other, effectively closed the door on the possibility of finding common ground. Truman spoke of reaching out to Chinese "liberals" instead of to Mao's inner circle, an erroneous choice that further contributed to putting off the day when U.S.-China relations could be normalized. Thus, well before war broke out in Korea, chances for U.S. recognition of China became extremely small (See the documents in Michael H. Hunt, ed., Crises in U.S. Foreign Policy: An International History Reader (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. xxx). Mao's only realistic option was to "lean to one side" and drive the best bargain he could—the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance, long understood as the last of China's unequal treaties.

Although we now know that the North Korean invasion of the South was the subject of intense bargaining among the three communist countries' leaders, and that Chinese intervention in support of the North was by no means preordained, Truman's inner circle was surely unaware of such details. Even if they had been known, it is doubtful that they would have led to a decision by the president not to intervene in Korea. The thinking behind NSC-68, and (as Glenn Paige's account makes clear) the small number of people involved in the Korean decisions, (Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950 (New York: Free Press, 1968), p. 282. Except for the decision of June 29, 1950 to send combat troops to the Pusan area, Truman did not consult with any formal group such as the NSC. All the decision making was ad hoc). virtually assured U.S. intervention in Korea—no matter Dean Acheson's "perimeter speech," the warnings of U.S. military and civilian officials about the looming Korean "volcano" of civil war, (Bruce Cumings, The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 192). Congressional reluctance to provide economic assistance to the ROK, or Kennan's concern that a communist threat in the East would draw attention away from the main threat in the West. As Truman would recall, the first images that came to his mind when he got word of North Korea's crossing of the 38th parallel were of Munich, Manchuria, and Ethiopia (see: Harry S Truman, Memoirs, vol. II: Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p. 333). "I felt strongly," Truman wrote, "that if South Korea was allowed to fall Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores. . . . If this was allowed to go unchallenged it would mean a third world war . . . " Given the American political scene—pressures from the Republican right wing and the onset to McCarthyism—Truman was not about to risk charges of being "soft" on communism. See, for example, his speech of October 27, 1948 in defense of his "doctrine," at Public Papers of the Presidents 1948.

In making his historic commitment to South Korea's defense, Truman was not merely responding to a communist probe of the West's weak spots, as some U.S. officials initially thought. For the United States, the decision was considered a "test case." The "test" was conceived by the president and his chief advisers as having three dimensions: opposition to communist aggression wherever it occurred (an extension, therefore, of the Truman Doctrine in Europe); preservation of the collective security system under the United Nations; and no appeasement (See Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 98-100). Thus, the reputation of the United States as a dependable ally was believed to be on the line (Ibid., p. 175). The Korean decision was made with considerable concern about security issues, including protection of Japan and Taiwan; but no one questioned the correctness of intervening. Yet the Korean War, after all, was a civil war as much as it was an international war, a clash of contending Korean nationalisms brought on by the U.S.-Soviet decision at the end of World War II to divide the country. But the debate among Truman's inner circle never entertained such matters; nor did it address the nature of the government the United States became committed to defending. Nor, finally, did U.S. leaders consider Korea's intrinsic value—its culture and history—separately from its place in the global contest with the Soviets (Ibid., p. 350).

What was important for American leaders about Korea was its derivative value. It could have been anywhere, said Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk; the U.S. response would have been the same (Ibid., p. 331). It was a moral conflict as much as a strategic one. This unchallenged perspective facilitated the miscalculations and misperceptions that would follow (See John G. Stoessinger, Nations in Darkness: China, Russia, and America, 4th ed. (New York: Random House, 1986), chap. 4). Vietnam would fall into the same category—a country of no particular importance to U.S. national interests when considered in isolation, yet somehow "vital" to protect nonetheless in the context of the Cold War. Hence Korea marked the initial step in the globalization of containment, as Robert Osgood wrote (Robert E. Osgood, Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), and Vietnam would be the second. These conflicts set the stage for global interventionism, on the assumption that the communist menace had become worldwide in scope and that Chinese aggressiveness was the Asian component of a full-fledged Moscow-directed assault on the West. The Chinese were surely motivated by an immediate sense of threat. After all, they believed they had earlier withstood U.S. intervention in their civil war with the KMT. Though hesitant to make a commitment to defend North Korea without assurances of full Soviet support—the final decision was not made until October 4-5, 1950—the PRC leadership viewed the possibility of a U.S. occupation of the entire Korean peninsula and Taiwan as sufficient reason to intervene (Zhang Baijia, "'Resist America': China's Role in the Korean and Vietnam Wars," in Michael D. Swaine and Zhang Tuosheng, eds., Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996), pp. 187-88, 190). The fact of U.S. entry into North Korea was decisive; it threatened China's own security and the socialist revolutions in both countries (Ibid., p. 186). Mao reasoned that whether or not China prevailed against U.S. forces, China simply had to act; otherwise, not merely its security but also its prestige would suffer, "and the American invaders will run more rampant, and have negative effects for the entire Far East" (See his telegrams to Stalin and Premier Zhou Enlai in October 1950, in New York Times, February 26, 1992, p. A4). In the end Beijing, just like Washington, felt a moral as well as a security imperative to go to war (Zhang Baijia, "'Resist America,'" p. 190). One other Chinese motive was revealed by Mao in once-secret internal talks: his need to demonstrate his revolutionary credentials to Stalin. Mao would say that only when China sent troops into Korea did Stalin trust him. Yet in both cases, leaders underestimated the opponent's will and misunderstood its motives (See Allen S. Whiting, "U.S. Crisis Management vis-à-vis China," in Swaine and Zhang, eds., Managing Sino-American Crises, pp. 218-19).

China and the United States could each claim victory in the Korean War, since their Korean allies had been successfully protected. But that was hardly the whole story, for both had failed in their larger strategic objective, which was to deter future interventions elsewhere in Asia. For the United States, moreover, war in Korea had become a sharp-edged political issue, with Republicans charging that Truman's limited-war doctrine was immoral and Truman's joint chiefs of staff answering that a wider war to "win" in Korea would have been (in General Omar Bradley's famous words) "the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy." Thus, for the United States, limited victory in Korea—stalemate in fact—surely contributed to seeing Vietnam as the inevitable next stop for containment. Indeed, by the time the Korean armistice was signed in 1953, the first of several U.S. administrations (Dwight Eisenhower's) had already committed to preventing the extension of communism in Asia.

Cold War Test Case: Vietnam

Numerous explanations of "why Vietnam?" have emerged since the war ended in 1975. Common to many of these interpretations is American hegemony: the belief among U.S. leaders that the nation was being tested again, and that leadership of the Free World demanded a major commitment to winning lest the communist world prevail in Southeast Asia and beyond. War in Vietnam preoccupied every U.S. president from Roosevelt to Ford. Each of them, and their top advisers, subscribed to the basic idea that while Vietnam was not intrinsically important, it had increasing symbolic meaning for America's power position in the world. As one reads the basic documents—the NSC strategic assessments from 1950 on, the presidential papers, and the Pentagon Papers collection among others—one finds Vietnam moving inexorably to center stage in U.S. global strategy. At first this evolution was a function of war in Korea: While the Americans were engaged in Northeast Asia, it behooved the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to support the French effort in Indochina. The two wars were interlinked, and the French were viewed as America's proxy in the common struggle to stem the communist tide. Once an armistice was arranged in Korea, Vietnam became America's war for the next twenty-five years, first in ongoing support of the French, then (following the Geneva Conference in 1954 that divided Vietnam) in replacement of them.

The United States, particularly the State Department's Far Eastern desk (See William Appleman Williams et al., eds., America in Vietnam: A Documentary History (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), pp. 54-55, 90-91, 105-6), certainly had misgivings about supporting French colonialism and France's choice of a Vietnamese leader (Emperor Bao Dai) who, like Syngman Rhee, had long lived outside his country. Bao Dai, moreover, was widely regarded as a colonial puppet; he, like other leaders in Saigon in the years to follow, would never be able to claim the nationalist mantle that Ho Chi Minh held. But Ho, after all, was considered another Mao, not another Tito; his communism mattered far more (to Acheson and the State Department's European desk) than his Vietnamese nationalism (Ibid., pp. 93-97). U.S. recognition of Bao Dai's government in February 1950 thus followed Chinese and Soviet recognition of Ho's the month before. Moreover, whereas Korea's independence was never a contested issue, Vietnam's (as well as Cambodia's and Laos') was. France's constant postponement of grants of independence to the three colonies was another source of U.S. irritation. Nevertheless, U.S. presidents consistently placed such reservations second to strategic assessments that called for ever-larger investments of money and then troops to fight “Soviet imperialism.”

Following on Truman’s commitment to intervention in Korea, U.S. military support, which eventually accounted for around 80 percent of France’s war costs, began to flow into Vietnam. Accompanying the flow was an escalating perception of threat. The documents cited in this paragraph are from Neil Sheehan et al., eds., The Pentagon Papers (New York: Bantam, 1971), pp. 9, 27-32 [hereafter, PP(B)], and in the much larger “Gravel Edition” of the Pentagon Papers published by Beacon Press. NSC 48/1 (December 1949) spoke of the need to contain communism in Indochina. NSC 64 (February 1950) linked events in Indochina to “anticipated communist plans to seize all of Southeast Asia,” recited the domino theory, and recommended that “all practicable measures be taken to prevent further communist expansion in Southeast Asia.” Reflecting the outbreak of war in Korea, a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of December 1950 considered direct Chinese intervention in Indochina “imminent.” NSC 48/2 (December 1950) repeated that concern in calling for U.S. economic and military assistance against “threats from Communist aggression, direct or indirect . . .” NSC 124/2 (June 1952) also put the China threat at center stage, warning that “the danger of an overt military attack against Southeast Asia is inherent in the existence of a hostile and aggressive Communist China.” And NSC 5405 (January 1954) considered defense of Indochina the “keystone of the defense of mainland Southeast Asia except possibly Malaya.” These and other official assessments prophesied that the loss of even a single country to communism would be the beginning of a political and economic disaster for U.S. interests. Consequently, whereas before Korea, the security community’s advice to the president was to support the “Bao Dai solution” and sustain the French war effort, after Korea—and as the French effort began to fail—the United States was looking for ways to contain a presumptively Chinese threat and prevent a negotiated capitulation to Ho Chi Minh’s forces. Thus, NSC 5405 rejected any political solution, including a coalition government in Vietnam, and instead stated: “It will be U.S. policy to accept nothing short of a military victory in Indo-China" (PP(B), pp. 36-37).

But it did. The United States was forced to swallow what the NSC called a “disaster” in Vietnam, the agreement reached at the Geneva Conference to divide the country at the seventeenth parallel. From there on, it was U.S. policy to replace the French, prevent the holding of national elections called for in the Geneva Accords because of the certainty of Ho Chi Minh’s victory, and go about “nation building” with yet another absentee leader who lacked nationalist credentials, Ngo Dinh Diem. But efforts to “reform” his and successor governments failed just as they had in South Korea and in Vietnam under French rule. Constantly thwarted by corrupt and ineffectual South Vietnamese leaders, the Americans felt perfectly justified in promoting coups and giving the green light (in the case of Diem and his brother) to assassinations, again to no avail. See, for instance, the cables of Ambassador (to Saigon) Henry Cabot Lodge in PP (B), pp. 208-10 and his comments at a meeting of the policy-making principals in July 1965, in Hunt, ed., Crises in U.S. Foreign Policy, pp. 352-53: “We have to do what we think we ought to do regardless of what the Saigon government does. As we move ahead on a new phase—it gives us the right and duty to do certain things with or without the government’s approval.” That is clearly what happened in November 1963 when Kennedy in all but executive order authorized U.S. agreement to Diem’s elimination. The latest once-secret information on that episode is available from the National Security Archive at nsarchiv.org. The second Vietnam War revealed a peculiarly American penchant for relying on military solutions. At one level was counter-guerrilla warfare to "win the hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese people. Under Kennedy, this effort was shaped by the conviction that communist organizers in the countrysides of the Third World were no more than "scavengers of the modernization process." "Communism is best understood as a disease of the transition to modernization," said Walt Rostow in a much-publicized speech (W. W. Rostow, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Underdeveloped Areas," Department of State Bulletin, vol. 45, No. 1154 (August 7, 1961), pp. 233-38). If guerrilla warfare, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's "military arm," could be defeated in Vietnam, Rostow proclaimed, there would be no more Cubas, Congos, or Vietnams. Kennedy clearly agreed. Most emphatically in a speech of April 20, 1961, following on the disastrous attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro's government in the landing at the Bay of Pigs. Text in Williams et al., eds., America in Vietnam, pp. 189-91.

At some point, however, it became evident that counter-guerrilla tactics were not working. In a briefing of top officials, General Maxwell Taylor said: "The ability of the Viet-Cong continuously to rebuild their units and to make good their losses is one of the mysteries of this guerrilla war. . . . Not only do the Viet-Cong units have the recuperative power of the phoenix, but they have an amazing ability to maintain morale'' (PP (B), p. 372). Taylor evidently did not consider anti-foreign nationalism much of an explanation. After 1964, U.S. strategy leaned more on force at a second level: the unprecedented bombing of both North and South Vietnam. Here there was considerable internal confusion and bickering about what bombing was supposed to accomplish—breaking Hanoi's will? Destroying North Vietnam's industrial capabilities? Improving morale in the South?—but no lack of enthusiasm for the task itself. Yet no amount of military firepower proved capable either of defeating or demoralizing the enemy, or uplifting the South Vietnamese military and civilian leadership. The U.S. response to clear indications that military measures of any kind and dimension were failing to produce victory speaks directly to the hegemony thesis. By 1965, the argument of some of Lyndon Johnson's advisers for continuing the bombing strategy (now called "sustained reprisal") had turned to "setting a higher price for the future upon all adventures of guerrilla warfare . . . " Even though "the odds of success [by bombing] . . . may be somewhere between 25% and 75%," bombing would at least make Hanoi's plans more expensive (Memo from McGeorge Bundy to Lyndon Johnson, February 7, 1965, ibid., p. 426). To this argument was added the idea that what was really at stake, even in failure, was America's reputation. In his Draft memo, John T. McNaughton, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, to McNamara, March 24, 1965 said the following:

> *It is essential—however badly SEA [Southeast Asia] may go over the next 1-3 years—that U.S. emerge as a "good doctor." We must have kept promises, been tough, taken risks, gotten bloodied, and hurt the enemy very badly. We must avoid harmful appearances which will affect judgments by, and provide pretexts to, other nations regarding . . . U.S. policy, power, resolve and competence to deal with their problems.*

There were, of course, top advisers such as Walt Rostow and the Joint Chiefs of Staff who persisted in believing that more bombing would produce the desired results. But what the above excerpts reveal is that lost faith in bombing did not end it; rather, bombing became a show of national resolve, essential for the next time. The key national interest, John

McNaughton (a top adviser to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara) would say in the same memo just quoted, was no longer about saving Vietnam. U.S. aims were now:

70%--To avoid a humiliating U.S. defeat (to our reputation as a guarantor).

20%--To keep SVN [South Vietnam] (and the adjacent) territory from Chinese hands.

10%--To permit the people of SVN to enjoy a better, freer way of life.

If the dominoes were not to keep falling, reputation was the key and displays of staying power were essential to that reputation. As Rostow would argue, the United States could still achieve its objectives in Vietnam "if we enter the exercise with the same determination and staying power that we entered the long test on Berlin and the short test on the Cuba missiles. But it will take that kind of Presidential commitment and staying power." While acknowledging "anxieties and complications on our side of the line," what mattered most to Rostow—and, he had every reason to believe, to everyone else in the Kennedy-Johnson administrations—was the "limited but real margin of influence on the outcome which flows from the simple fact that at this stage of history we are the greatest power in the world—if we behave like it."Reputation, test case, hegemony—every president concerned with Vietnam bought into the validity of these ideas and determined somehow to make the most of a war they *knew* was being lost. By the time the war had become "Johnson's war," it was increasingly evident to the president that victory was eluding him. Notwithstanding his tough public words, Johnson privately sharply questioned his military and civilian advisers about why and how they thought the United States could win in Vietnam. In one meeting he specifically wondered whether "Westerners can ever win in Asia" and while fighting side by side with a "government [that] changes every month." Maybe the United States should "make our stand somewhere else?" he offered.

But at that meeting and in conversations revealed after his death, Johnson succumbed to the logic of "national security." He had grave and growing doubts: "the biggest damn mess I ever saw," he said on one taped conversation with McGeorge Bundy in the Oval Office. "I don't think it's worth fighting for, and I don't think we can get out." In another conversation with Senator Richard B. Russell, a close friend, Johnson admitted that "We're in the quicksands up to our neck, and I just don't know what the hell to do about it." Johnson worried about sending young men to die and about being impeached for being "soft on communism" (Russell Baker, "What L.B.J. Knew," *New York Times*, March 18, 1997, p. A19). Thus, he fell back on the anti-communist zeal that had always worked for presidents, with Congress and with the public. Johnson simply saw no alternative to deeper involvement. And what of the Chinese? Having been a strong supporter of Vietnam's revolution against the French—mainly in the form of advisers and military aid—China reacted to U.S. escalation in the mid-1960s in much the same way as in Korea: It considered the threat to Vietnam equivalent to a threat to the PRC's own security. Chinese leaders told their Vietnamese counterparts that they would send troops if requested—and in the end, China did dispatch about 320,000 troops, though none for combat. But at the same time, and contrary to the Korean experience, Mao and other conveyed to Washington that it did not want a war with the United States—messages that Washington reciprocated. Though there were aerial incidents that might have led to direct Sino-American conflict, both governments took steps to prevent it. U.S. troops never entered North Vietnam, and the U.S. government never publicized the fact that Chinese troops were there. "One can say," a Chinese scholar has written, "that the two sides established initial trust during the confrontation."

I am not simply bringing up Vietnam for my own health here. U.S. involvement in Vietnam deviated from Korea in a number of respects, principal among them being its unilateral character. President Truman took the Korea issue before the UN—and, thanks to the absence of the Soviet representative, secured Security Council approval—and eventually received troop support from a number of countries. He could thus claim that intervention was legitimate, both in terms of repelling North Korean aggression and defending the South Korean government and people. But Vietnam was a largely unilateral effort; though various countries (including South Korea) contributed, the war from first to last was a matter of American decision. Of course, in both cases the issue of legitimacy was not entirely resolved: Truman never asked Congress for a declaration of war, or even consulted with Congress beforehand; and (with the exception of Eisenhower's informal but critical consultations with key members of Congress on Vietnam in 1954) no president brought Congress into discussion of policy making. Moreover, the support the United States received from other countries in both wars never impacted U.S. decision making. A "coalition of the willing" always presumed U.S. leadership. The "imperial presidency" and U.S. unilateralism were thus born in these wars; we have witnessed the survival of these trends most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan, despite the fact that since 1973 a War Powers Resolution has been the law.

"Limited war" is another legacy of Korea and Vietnam. Presidents throughout were disposed to "minimax" strategies: seeking maximum gains with relatively smaller investments. Of course the sacrifices of blood and treasure were very large in both wars, and in terms of destructiveness, these wars were anything but limited. Yet presidents withheld uses of force that would have created even larger and more destructive conflicts, such as by carrying the war into China, committing still larger numbers of ground troops, bombing large cities and ports, and using the atomic bomb. All presidents thus had to endure political flak for not fighting to win despite their use of extraordinary firepower: General MacArthur's accusations after Truman fired him would be just the beginning of presidential troubles when fighting for anything less than complete victory and allegedly interfering with the professional military's right to conduct hostilities as it sees fit. In limiting U.S. objectives in Korea and Vietnam to deterrence and defense, however, the aims of policy were not met. The United States saw Korea still divided and a North Vietnamese takeover of the South. Moreover, U.S. presidents presided over the expansion of both wars in other directions. Vietnam became an extension of the Korean War, at least in the minds of U.S. leaders; and the war in Vietnam engulfed both Laos and Cambodia. In Cambodia, the Nixon administration's preference for military action rather than acceptance of Prince Sihanouk's version of neutrality led to the overthrow of the government and the start of a nightmarish reign of terror under the Khmer Rouge. Thus, large-scale U.S. interventions accomplished defense of South Korea, but at the cost of constant inter-Korean tension, a long-term U.S. military presence there and in Japan, and postponement of normal relationships with Vietnam, China, and North Korea.

It might be objected that in the context of the Cold War, presidents and their top advisers had limited options: Intervention in Korea and Vietnam was unavoidable for both domestic and international reasons. After all, the Soviet Union and its allies appeared to be on the march; if they weren't stopped, it was irresponsible not to take action to stop them—and politically risky as well. (LBJ thought he would be impeached if he pulled U.S. forces out of Vietnam; and not being "the first president to lose a war" was the first rule of presidents involved in one.)

Hindsight only obscures the real-world choices that faced leaders who had witnessed the Soviets clamping down on Eastern Europe. These leaders therefore had every reason to presume and anticipate aggressive communist behavior in Asia. But while these are reasonable counter-arguments to nonintervention, they inadvertently make the very point I conclude with based on the case studies. American administrations are consistently faced with unpalatable choices because of their prior commitment to being global policeman. They misinterpret the circumstances of the time—the communist threat, the terrorist threat—as requiring a crusade rather than considering each situation from the standpoint of that country's own history and nationalist identity. U.S. leaders often argue that leadership of the Free World is thrust upon them, and that "history" has chosen the United States to bear the greatest burdens. In reality, the notion that America is destined to lead, and moreover is beneficent and non-imperial in leading, forms part of the mythology that justifies interventionism. "We are the indispensable nation," as Madeleine Albright once put it. President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech continues this tradition.

Continuity, from the Truman Doctrine to the Neo-Conservatism

The Neo-conservative agenda under the Bush administration should be viewed as the culmination of a (bipartisan) "Post War" foreign policy framework, which provides the basis for the planning of the contemporary wars and atrocities including the setting up of torture chambers, concentration camps and the extensive use of prohibited weapons directed against civilians. From Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan, to the CIA sponsored military coups in Latin America and Southeast Asia, the objective has been to ensure US military hegemony and global economic domination, as initially formulated under the "Truman Doctrine". Despite significant policy differences, successive Democratic and Republican administrations, over a span of more than sixty years, from Harry Truman to Barack Obama have carried out this global military agenda. What we are dealing with is a criminal US foreign policy agenda. Criminalization does not pertain to one or more heads of State. It pertains to the entire State system, it's various civilian and military institutions as well as the powerful corporate interests behind the formulation of US foreign policy, the Washington think tanks, the creditor institutions which finance the military machine. Starting with the Korean War in 1950 and extending to the wars in the Middle East and Central Asia, this period is marked by extensive war crimes resulting in the death of more than ten million people. This figure does not include those who perished as a result of poverty, starvation and disease. War crimes are the result of the criminalization of the US State and foreign policy apparatus. We are not solely dealing specifically with individual war criminals, but with a process involving decision makers acting at different level, with a mandate to carry out war crimes, following established guidelines and procedures. What distinguishes the Bush and Obama administrations in relation to the historical record of US sponsored crimes and atrocities, is that the concentration camps, targeted assassinations and torture chambers are now openly considered as legitimate forms of intervention, which sustain "the global war on terrorism" and support the spread of Western democracy.

The crimes committed by the US against the people of Korea in the course of the Korean War but also in its aftermath are unprecedented in modern history. Moreover, it is important to understand that these US sponsored crimes against humanity committed in the 1950's have, over the years, contributed to setting “a pattern of killings” and US human rights violations in different parts of the World. The Korean War was also characterized by a practice of targeted assassinations of political dissidents, which was subsequently implemented by the CIA in numerous countries including Indonesia, Vietnam, Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador, Afghanistan, Iraq. Invariably these targeted killings were committed on the instructions of the CIA and carried out by a US sponsored proxy government or military dictatorship. More recently, targeted assassinations of civilians, “legalized” by the US Congress have become, so to speak, the “New Normal”. The Korean War had set the stage for subsequent US military interventions. It was an initial phase of a post-World War II “military roadmap” of US led wars, special operations, coups d’etat, covert operations, US sponsored insurgencies and regime change spanning over of more than half a century. The project of global warfare has been carried out in all major regions of the World, through the US military’s geographic command structure, not to mention the CIA’s covert operations geared toward toppling sovereign governments. This project of Worldwide conquest was initially established under the so-called “Truman Doctrine”. The latter initiated what the Pentagon later (in the wake of the Cold war under the NeoConservatives) entitled America`s “Long War”. What we are dealing with is global warfare, a Worldwide process of conquest, militarization and corporate expansionism. The latter is the driving force. “Economic conquest” is implemented through the support of concurrent intelligence and military operations. Financial and monetary destabilization is another mechanism of economic warfare directed against sovereign countries. In 2000, preceding the eleciton of George W. Bush to the White House, The Project for a New American Century (PNAC), A Washington Neoconservative think tank had stipulated four core missions for the US military:

“defend the American homeland;

fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theater wars;

perform the “constabulary” duties associated with shaping the security environment in critical regions;

transform U.S. forces to exploit the “revolution in military affairs;”

George W. Bush’s Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, his Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney had commissioned the PNAC blueprint prior to the 2000 presidential elections. The PNAC outlines a roadmap of conquest. It calls for “the direct imposition of U.S. “forward bases” throughout Central Asia and the Middle East: “with a view to ensuring economic domination of the world, while strangling any potential “rival” or any viable alternative to America’s vision of a ‘free market’ economy”. Distinct from theater wars, the so-called “constabulary functions” imply a form of global military policing using various instruments of military intervention including punitive bombings and the sending in of US Special Forces, etc. Constabulary functions were contemplated in the first phase of US war plans against Iran. They were identified as ad hoc military interventions which could be applied as an “alternative” to so-called theater wars.

This document had no pretence: its objectives were strictly military. No discussion of America’s role in peace-keeping or the spread of democracy. 15 The main PNAC document is entitled Rebuilding America`s Defenses, Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century (The PNAC website is: http://www.newamericancentury.org). Washington is intent upon creating political divisions in East Asia not only between the ROK and the DPRK but between North Korea and China, with a view to ultimately isolating the DPRK. In a bitter irony, US military facilities in the ROK are being used to threaten China as part of a process of military encirclement. In turn, Washington has sought to create political divisions between countries as well fomenting wars between neighboring countries (e.g. the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, the confrontation between India and Pakistan). Sixty years later under a bogus UN mandate, the military occupation by US forces of South Korea prevails. It is worth noting that the UN never formally created a United Nations Command. The designation was adopted by the US without a formal decision by the UN Security Council. In 1994, the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali clarified in a letter to the North Korean Foreign Minister that "the Security Council did not establish the unified command as a subsidiary organ under its control, but merely recommended [in 1950] the creation of such a command, specifying that it be under the authority of the United States". South Korea is still under military occupation by US forces. In the wake of the Korean War and the signing of the Armistice agreement, the national forces of the ROK were placed under the jurisdiction of the so-called UN Command. This arrangement implied that all units of the Korean military were de facto under the control of US commanders. In 1978 a binational Republic of Korea – United States Combined Forces Command (CFC), was created, headed by a US General. In substance, this was a change in labels in relation to the so-called UN Command. To this date, Korean forces remain under the command of a US general. The CFC was originally to be dismantled when the U.S. hands back wartime operational control of South Korean troops to Seoul in 2015, but there were fears here that this could weaken South Korea's defenses. The change of heart comes amid increasingly belligerent rhetoric from North Korea. Park told her military brass at the briefing to launch "immediate and strong counterattacks" against any North Korean provocation. She said she considers the North's threats "very serious," and added, "If any provocations against our people and country ake place, the military has to respond quickly and strongly without any political consideration" (Chosun Ibo, April 13, 2013).

United States Forces Korea (USFK) was established in 1957. It is described as "as a subordinate-unified command of U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM)", which could be deployed to attack third countries in the region including Russia and China. There are officially 28,500 US troops under the jurisdiction of USFK. Recent figures of the US Department of Defense confirm that 37,000 US troops under USFK are currently (April 2013) stationed in South Korea (See United States Forces Korea | Mission of the ROK/US Combined Forces Command).

In the past, USFK commanders like General James D. Thurman, who also also assumed the position of CFC Commander and UNC Commander, took his orders from the Pentagon and overrode ROK president and Commander in Chief Park Geun Hye. Regular active troops of the ROK Armed Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) theoretically under national ROK command consist of more 600,000 active personnel and more than 2 million reservists. According to the terms of the CFC, however, these troops were de facto under the CFC command which is headed by a US General. What this means is that in addition to the thousands of US troops of the USFK, the US command structure has de facto control over all operational units of the Korean Armed Forces. In essence, what this means is that the ROK does not control its armed forces - ROK armed forces serve the interests of a foreign power, and are thus malleable tools of imperialism. Annually the US-ROK conducts war games directed against North Korea. These war games –which simulate a conventional and/or nuclear attack against North Korea– are often conducted in late July coinciding with Armistice Day. In turn, US military bases along South Korea's Western coastline and on Jeju island are used to threaten China as part of a process of military encirclement. In view of the ROK-US agreement under the CFC, South Korean troops under US command are deployed in the context of US military operations in the region, which are actively coordinated with USFK and USPACOM. South Korea is multibillion bonanza for America's weapons industry. In the course of the last 4 years the ROK ranked the fourth largest arms importer in the World "with the U.S. accounting for 77 percent of its arms purchases." It should be noted that these weapons are purchased with Korean tax payers' wons, they are de facto under the supervision of the US military, namely the CFC Joint Command which is headed by a US General. In recent developments, the ROK president has hinted towards the possibility of pre-emptive strikes against North Korea:

> *"As commander-in-chief of the armed forces, I will trust the military's judgment on abrupt and surprise provocations by North Korea as it is the one that directly faces off against the North," Park said, according to the* London Telegraph. *"Please carry out your duty of guarding the safety of the people without being distracted at all."*

Park's defense minister also promised an "active deterrence" against Pyongyang and seemed to suggest Seoul would consider carrying out preemptive strikes on North Korean nuclear and missile sites.

UNDERSTANDING THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM

The Korea Nuclear Issue. Who Threatens Whom? / Historical Background: Hiroshima and Nagasaki: August 6 and 9, 1945

America's early nuclear weapons doctrine under the Manhattan Project was not based on the Cold War notions of "Deterrence" and "Mutually Assured Destruction" (MAD). US nuclear doctrine pertaining to Korea was established following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, which were largely directed against civilians. The strategic objective was to trigger a "massive casualty producing event" resulting in tens of thousands of deaths. The objective was to terrorize an entire nation, as a mean of military conquest. Military targets were not the main objective: the notion of "collateral damage" was used as a justification for the mass killing of civilians, under the official pretence that Hiroshima was "a military base" and that civilians were not the target. In the words of president Harry Truman:

*"We have discovered the most terrible bomb in the history of the world. … This weapon is to be used against Japan … **[We] will use it so that military objectives and soldiers and sailors are the target and not women and children.** Even if the Japs are savages, ruthless, merciless and fanatic, we as the leader of the world for the common welfare cannot drop that terrible bomb on the old capital or the new. … The target will be a purely military one… It seems to be the most terrible thing ever discovered, but it can be made the most useful." (President Harry S. Truman, Diary, July 25, 1945)*

*"The World will note that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a military base. **That was because we wished in this first attack to avoid, insofar as possible, the killing of civilians.."** (President Harry S. Truman in a radio speech to the Nation, August 9, 1945).*

Nobody within the upper echelons of the US government and military believed that Hiroshima was a military base, Truman was lying to himself and to the American public. To this day the use of nuclear weapons against Japan are justified as a necessary cost for bringing the war to an end and ultimately "saving lives". During the Korean War, the US had envisaged the use of nuclear weapons against North Korea shortly after the Soviet Union had tested its first atom bomb in August 29, 1949, about ten months prior to the onset of the Korean War in June 1950. Inevitably, the possession of the atom bomb by the Soviet Union acted as a deterrent against the use of nuclear weapons by the US in the course of the Korean War. In the immediate wake of the Korean War, there was a turnaround in US nuclear weapons policy regarding North Korea. The use of nukes weapons had been envisaged on a pre-emptive basis against the DPRK, on the presumption that the Cold War nuclear powers, including China and the Soviet Union would not intervene. Barely a few years after the end of the Korean War, the US initiated its deployment of nuclear warheads in South Korea. This deployment in Uijongbu and Anyang-Ni had been envisaged as early as 1956.

It is worth noting that the US decision to bring nuclear warheads to South Korea was in blatant violation of Paragraph 13(d) of the Armistice Agreement which prohibited the warring factions from introducing new weapons into Korea. The actual deployment of nuclear warheads started in January 1958, four and a half years after the end of the Korean War, "with the introduction of five nuclear weapon systems: the Honest John surface-to-surface missile, the Matador cruise missile, the Atomic-Demolition Munition (ADM) nuclear landmine, and the 280-mm gun and 8-inch (203mm) howitzer." 21 (See The nuclear information project: US Nuclear Weapons in Korea). Officially the US deployment of nuclear weapons in South Korea lasted for 33 years. The deployment was targeted against North Korea as well China and the Soviet Union.

Concurrent and in coordination with the US deployment of nuclear warheads in South Korea, the ROK had initiated its own nuclear weapons program in the early 1970s. The official story is that the US exerted pressure on Seoul to abandon their nuclear weapons program and "sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in April 1975 before it had produced any fissile material." The fact of the matter is that the ROK's nuclear initiative was from the outset in the early 1970s under the supervision of the US and was developed as a component part of the US deployment of nuclear weapons, with a view to threatening North Korea. Moreover, while this program was officially ended in 1978, the US promoted scientific expertise as well as training of the ROK military in the use of nuclear weapons. And bear in mind: under the ROK-US CFC agreement, all operational units of the ROK are under joint command headed by a US General. This means that all the military facilities and bases established by the Korean military are de facto joint facilities. There are a total of 27 US military facilities in the ROK (See List of United States Army installations in South Korea – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). According to military sources, the removal of nuclear weapons from South Korea was initiated in the mid 1970s:

> The nuclear weapons storage site at Osan Air base was deactivated in late 1977. This reduction continued over the following years and resulted in the number of nuclear weapons in South Korea dropping from some 540 in 1976 to approximately 150 artillery shells and bombs in 1985. By the time of the Presidential Nuclear Initiative in 1991, roughly 100 warheads remained, all of which had been withdrawn by December 1991

According to official statements, the US withdrew its nuclear weapons from South Korea in December 1991. This withdrawal from Korea did not in any way modify the threat of nuclear war directed against the DPRK. On the contrary: it was tied to changes in US military strategy with regard to the deployment of nuclear warheads. Major North Korean cities were to be targeted with nuclear warheads from US continental locations and from US strategic submarines (SSBN) rather than military facilities in South Korea. The Bush administration in its 2001 Nuclear Posture Review established the contours of a new post 9/11 "pre-emptive" nuclear war doctrine, namely that nuclear weapons could be used as an instrument of "self-defense" against non-nuclear states. "Requirements for U.S. nuclear strike capabilities" directed against North Korea were established as part of a Global Strike mission under the helm of US Strategic Command Headquarters in Omaha Nebraska, the so-called CONPLAN 8022, which was directed against a number of "rogue states" including North Korea as well as China and Russia:

"On November 18, 2005, the new Space and Global Strike command became operational at STRATCOM after passing testing in a nuclear war exercise involving North Korea.

Current U.S. Nuclear strike planning against North Korea appears to serve three roles: The first is a vaguely defined traditional deterrence role intended to influence North Korean behavior prior to hostilities.

This role was broadened somewhat by the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review to not only deter but also dissuade North Korea from pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

Why, after five decades of confronting North Korea with nuclear weapons, the Bush administration believes that additional nuclear capabilities will somehow dissuade North Korea from pursuing weapons of mass destruction [nuclear weapons program] is a mystery."

While the Western media in chorus focus on the North Korean nuclear threat, what prevails when reviewing Korean history is the asymmetry of nuclear capabilities. The fact that the US has been threatening North Korea with nuclear war for over half a century is barely acknowledged by the Western media. Where is the threat? The asymmetry of nuclear weapons capabilities between the US and the DPRK must be emphasised. According to ArmsControl.org (April 2013) the United States

"**possesses 5,113 nuclear warheads, including tactical, strategic, and non-deployed weapons.**"

Moreover, according to The Federation of American Scientists the U.S. possesses 500 tactical nuclear warheads:

On April 3, 2013 the U.S. State Department issued the latest fact sheet on its data exchange with Russia under New START, sharing the numbers of deployed nuclear warheads and New START-accountable delivery systems held by each country, 2. On May 3, 2010, the United States Department of Defense released for the first time the total number of nuclear warheads (5,113) in the U.S. stockpile. The Defense Department includes in this stockpile active warheads which are operational and deployed or ready to be deployed, and inactive warheads which are maintained "in a non-operational status, and have their tritium bottle removed." Sources: Arms Control Association, Federation of American Scientists, International Panel on Fissile Materials, U.S. Department of Defense, and U.S. Department of State).

In contrast the DPRK, according to the same source:

"has separated enough plutonium for roughly 4-8 nuclear warheads. North Korea unveiled a centrifuge facility in 2010, buts ability to produce highly-enriched uranium for weapons remains unclear." (ArmsControl.org)

Moreover, according to expert opinion:

"there is no evidence that North Korea has the means to lob a nuclear-armed missile at the United States or anyone else. So far, it has produced several atomic bombs and tested them, but it lacks the fuel and the technology to miniaturize a nuke and place it on a missile"

The threat of nuclear war does not emanate from the the DPRK but from the US and its allies. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the unspoken victim of US military aggression, has been incessantly portrayed as a war mongering nation, a menace to the American Homeland and a "threat to World peace". These stylized accusations have become part of a media consensus.

Meanwhile, Washington has been implementing a $32 billion refurbishing of strategic nuclear weapons as well as a revamping of its tactical nuclear weapons, which according to a 2002

Senate decision “are harmless to the surrounding civilian population.” These continuous threats and actions of latent aggression directed against the DPRK should also be understood as part of the broader US military agenda in East Asia, directed against China and Russia. It is important that people across the land, in the US, Western countries, come to realize that the United States rather than North Korea or Iran is a threat to global security. The US is still at war with the DPRK. This US sponsored state of war is directed against both North and South Korea. It is characterized by persistent military threats (including the use of nuclear weapons) against the DPRK. It also threatens the ROK which has been under US military occupation since September 1945. What has to be emphasized prior to forthcoming negotiations pertaining a “Peace Treaty” is that the US and the ROK are not “Allies”. The “real alliance” is that which unifies and reunites North and South Korea against foreign intrusion and aggression. What this signifies is that the US is in a state of war against the entire Korean Nation. The formulation of the Peace Treaty, therefore, requires the holding of bilateral talks between the ROK and the DPRK with a view to formulating a “joint position” regarding the terms to be included in a “Peace Treaty”. The terms of this Peace Treaty should under no circumstances be dictated by the US Aggressor, which is committed to maintaining its military presence on the Korean peninsula. It is worth noting in this regard, US foreign policy and military planners have already established their own scenario of “reunification” predicated on maintaining US occupation troops in Korea. Similarly, what is envisaged by Washington is a framework which will enable “foreign investors” to penetrate and pillage the North Korean economy. Washington’s objective is to impose the terms of Korea’s reunification. The NeoCons “Project for a New American Century” (PNAC) published in 2000 had intimated that in “post unification scenario”, the number of US troops (currently at 37,000) should be increased and that US military presence could be extended to North Korea. In a reunified Korea, the military mandate of the US garrison would be to implement so-called “stability operations in North Korea”:

> While Korea unification might call for the reduction in American presence on the peninsula and a transformation of U.S force posture in Korea, the changes would really reflect a change in their mission – and changing technological realities – not the termination of their mission. **Moreover, in any realistic post-unification scenario, U.S. forces are likely to have some role in stability operations in North Korea.** It is premature to speculate on the precise size and composition of a post-unification U.S. presence in Korea, but it is not too early to recognize that the presence of American forces in Korea serves a larger and longer-range strategic purpose. For the present, any reduction in capabilities of the current U.S. garrison on the peninsula would be unwise. If anything, there is a need to bolster them, especially with respect to their ability to defend against missile attacks and to limit the effects of North Korea’s massive artillery capability. In time, or with unification, the structure of these units will change and their manpower levels fluctuate, but U.S. presence in this corner of Asia should continue. (PNAC, Rebuilding America`s Defenses, Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century, p. 18, emphasis added)

Washington’s intentions are crystal clear. It is important, therefore, that these talks be conducted by the ROK and DPRK without the participation or interference of outside parties. These discussions must address the withdrawal of all US occupation forces as well as the removal of economic sanctions directed against North Korea. The exclusion of US military presence and the withdrawal of the 37,000 occupation forces should be a sine qua non requirement of a Peace Treaty. Economic sovereignty is a central issue. The shady transactions launched in the wake of the IMF bailout in 1997 must be addressed. These transactions were conducive to the illegal and fraudulent acquisition and ownership of a large part of South Korea’s high tech industry and banking by Western corporate capital. Similarly the impacts of the insertion of the ROK into the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) must also be examined. The Peace agreement would also be accompanied by the opening of the border between North and South.

SANCTIONS

"The increased use of sanctions and the resultant humanitarian crisis with which they became associated led policy makers and academics to re-evaluate their potential negative externalities. Unlike military conflict, sanctions are not intended to kill citizens of the target country (Drezner, 1998) so they are considered to be a more humane coercive policy. However, following the experience with sanctions in the 1990's critics began to challenge this logic, arguing that sanctions are a potentially immoral foreign policy tool that indiscriminately and unjustly targets poor and innocent elements of society. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan referred to sanctions as a "blunt instrument which hurts large numbers of people who are not their primary target."

"One explanation for the coercive mechanism at work when economic sanctions are employed is that they will hurt (or at least inconvenience) the general public sufficiently that the leaders are compelled to alter their behavior and policies as a result of pressure from the population. This traditional thinking suggests that sanctions are imposed to reduce the available resources in the targeted state, which reduces national wealth and creates a sense of deprivation in the targeted population. If the people suffer enough, they will pressure their government to alter its behavior in order to have the sanctions lifted. Other coercive mechanisms for sanctions besides civilian punishment have been explored, but given the fact that modern sanctions have their root in the deprivation-based concept of the medieval siege, their impact on the health of the targeted population should be considered. Because the civilian population is expected to be affected

when economic sanctions are implemented, sanctions have come under fire with many suggesting that they violate Just War Principles.

The Just War Doctrine requires aggressors to clearly differentiate between combatants and non-combatants. Critics of sanctions suggest that sanctions directly target civilians, often inflicting the greatest harm against the weakest elements of society, thus blatantly violating these principles. Garfield and Mueller & Mueller (1999) go so far as to suggest that populations at war may be better off than those under sanctions because the Geneva Conventions govern behavior in war but do not deal with sanctions. Because sanctions do not clearly discriminate between civilians and those that perpetrated the acts that led to international censure, sanctions are seen as unfairly punishing targeted publics….Even when provisions for humanitarian exemptions are included in sanctions policies, the general public may still suffer – especially the urban poor. Food aid programs are likely to be politically manipulated. Rationing programs increase dependence on the state. Without unfettered access to nutritious food and clean water, the average level of health of the civilian population will decrease. These shortages result from the broader economic impact that sanctions can have on a sanctioned society."

- Susan Hannah Allen and David J Lektzian in the Journal of Peace Research, (2013)

Among the strangling sanctions inflicted on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, S/RES/1718 (2006),

8. "Decides that:

(a) All member states shall prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to the DPRK, through their territories or by their nationals, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, and whether or not originating in their territories of:

(ii) All items, materials, equipment, goods and technology as set out in the list of documents S/2006?814 and S/2006/815, unless within 14 days of adoption of this resolution this Committee has

amended or completed their provisions also taking into account the list in document S/2006/816, as well as other items, materials, equipment, goods and technology, determined by the Security Council or the Committee, which COULD contribute to DPRK's nuclear-related, ballistic missile-related or other weapons of mass destruction – related programmes."

(iii) Luxury goods"

Many of the basic chemical, biological, electrical, medical etc. substances which are essential for normal daily living could also be included in the category defined as potentially "contributing" to the DPRK's nuclear –related activities, etc., but denying these crucial substances to the civilian population of the DPRK because they "could" have other uses is an act of violent aggression, which leads to drastic deterioration in their health and general standard of living. Under the description of possible "dual use," anything and everything necessary for life can be denied to the civilian population of that country.

Resolution S/RES/2094 (2013) contains this extremely dangerous passage:

23. Reaffirms the measures imposed in paragraph 8 (a)(iii) of resolution 1718 (2006) regarding luxury goods and clarifies that the term 'luxury goods' includes, but is not limited to the items specified in annex IV of this resolution'"

This last (23) intentionally vague and non-descript passage is surreptitiously making possible the designation of any item necessary for the normal, healthy, effective living and functioning of society to be labeled "luxury goods," and thereby proscribed, since to a starving person food is a luxury, and to a freezing person, the fuel necessary to heat his home or school is also a luxury. To many, clean water is a luxury, and is sold in bottles in stores all over the world to those who can afford to pay for it. To the destitute, necessities for living are luxuries. The hyperbaric chamber, which provides a cure for a gangrenous arm or leg, preventing the necessity for amputation, is complex equipment, involving chemical, biological, and electrical components, all of which are prohibited and denied to the DPRK by these sanctions, because the components necessary for the construction and maintenance of a hyperbaric chamber "could" be used for other purposes. (Dual use, again). And further, the hyperbaric chamber could also be designated a "luxury good," different in kind and substance from jewelry or a yacht, but a luxury, nevertheless.

In a superb essay by Joy Gordon, entitled "Cool War: Economic Sanctions as a Weapon of Mass Destruction" (published in Harper's, 2002) Ms. Gordon states:

"News of Iraqi fatalities has been well documented (by the United Nations, among others), though underreported by the media. What has remained invisible, however, is any documentation of how and by whom such a death toll has been justified for so long. How was the danger of goods entering Iraq assessed, and how was it weighed, if at all, against the mounting collateral damage? …It was easy to discover that for the last ten years a vast number of lengthy holds had been placed on billions of dollars worth of what seemed unobjectionable – and very much needed – imports to Iraq. But I soon learned that all U.N. records that could answer my questions were kept from public scrutiny. This is not to say that the UN is lacking in public documents related to the Iraq program. What is unavailable are the documents that show how the U.S. policy agenda has determined the outcome of humanitarian and security judgments….The operation of Iraq sanctions involves numerous agencies

within the United Nations...These agencies have been careful not to publicly discuss their ongoing frustration with the manner in which the program is operated....Over the last three years, through research and interviews with diplomats I have acquired many of the key confidential UN documents concerning the administration of Iraq sanctions. I obtained these documents on the condition that my sources remain anonymous. What they show is that the United States has fought aggressively throughout the last decade to purposefully minimize the humanitarian goods that enter the country. And it has done so in the face of enormous human suffering, including massive increases in child mortality and widespread epidemics...What is less well known is that the government of Saddam Hussein had invested heavily in health, education, and social programs for two decades prior to the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Before the Persian Gulf war Iraq was a rapidly developing country with free education, ample electricity, modernized agriculture and a robust middle class. According to the World Health Organization 93 percent of the population had access to health care. The devastation of the Gulf War destroyed all that."

On October 21, 2011 Valerie Amos, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs addressed the press in Beijing, China, on conditions in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and she gave a similar press briefing at the United Nations headquarters. Ms. Amos stated:

> "The background for my visit was the increasingly worrying information coming from the DPRK Government and in-country aid agencies, indicating that over 6 million people are in need of food assistance this year…The average annual food gap is around 1 million tonnes per year, out of a total food requirement of 5.3 million tonnes…Recent figures for children under five years of age show chronic malnutrition levels (i.e. stunting) at 33 percent nationwide and 45 percent in the north of the country. One nurse that I met at the pediatric hospital in HamHung told me the number of malnourished children coming to her hospital had increased 1.5 times (i.e. 50%) only since last year."

Ms. Amos then stated: "People in the DPRK suffer from a complex set of challenges including chronic poverty and under-development – structural causes with humanitarian implications." One must question whether Ms. Amos, in mentioning "structural causes" for this tragic, situation is attempting to blame the Socialist government of North Korea, because at no point in her presentation does Ms. Amos mention the devastating impact of the UN Security Council sanctions inflicted upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since 2005, five year prior to the dramatic deterioration in living conditions for "ordinary people" in the DPRK. I asked Ms. Amos about the destructive impact of sanctions upon the lives of citizens of the DPRK, and she did not deny this factor, but she did not discuss this, stating that it is not "within her mandate.".

On June 12, 2009 at the 6141 meeting, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1874 which contains a particularly ironic passage, and potentially opens an incriminating Pandora's Box implicating the West in war crimes against North Korea.

> "Point 14. Decides to authorize all Member States to, and that all Member States shall, seize and dispose of items the supply, sale, transfer or export of which is prohibited by paragraph 8(a), 8(b) or 8(c) or resolution 1718 or by paragraph 9 or 10 of the resolution that are identified in inspections pursuant to paragraph 11, 12 or 13 in a manner that is not inconsistent with their obligations under applicable Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1540 (2004) as well as any obligations of parties to the NPT, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction of 29 April 1997, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction of 10 April 1972, and decides further that all States shall cooperate in such efforts.

Therein, to quote Shakespeare, "lies the rub," or in modern terms, the scandal, the crime. The use of biological weapons was prohibited by the Geneva protocol of 1925. In the UK Telegraph, 10 June, 2010 was reported the following:

> "Did the U.S. Wage Germ Warfare in Korea?" According to Julian Ryall, "In the winter of 1952 Yun Chang Bin recalls, the American bombers flying overhead had become a fact of life…But then, one afternoon in early March, Yun was walking home from school when he saw Chinese troops on their hands and knees in the fields…There were about 30 or 40 of the Chinese volunteer troops spread out across the field…' Yun, now 72 says. 'They were wearing masks and gloves and some of them had brooms. They were sweeping up something from the ground and others were picking it up and putting it on a fire. Yun was told: 'They are catching flies. They came out of the bombs dropped by the American bastards.' The bombs had opened after hitting the ground and released thousands of insects.
>
> The insects had been spread over a large area of farmland and many escaped the mopping up operation. Disease broke out in the village. 'I remember the adults calling it enbyo, or heat disease. It was terrible. People developed very high fevers, became delirious….they groaned with the pain and drifted in and out of consciousness. They couldn't eat anything and just kept

> asking for cold water…there was little anyone could do for those who had been infected, particularly as no one knew what the illness was. Yun says he was later told it was typhoid. 'It killed my father. He lost his appetite, then lost all movement in the lower half of his body, so he was not able to move. He died 5 days after first complaining of feeling unwell, aged 52. In his neighborhood more than 30 people from 50 families died.'"

During the Korean War, North Korea and China lost almost a million troops. General MacArthur and the US Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized the use of atomic bombs against the People's Republic of China. President Truman denied permission. "Historians argue that a nuclear detonation, impossible to conceal from the eyes of the world, would have further inflamed tensions between east and west, but a more insidious form of warfare would have been relatively easy to carry out, and much simpler to dismiss as enemy disinformation." There are plenty of men and women who support Yun's claim that North Korean civilians were attacked with American biological weapons that contained flies, beetles, spiders, crickets and other insects carrying various life-threatening pathogens, from plague bacillus to cholera, anthrax, encephalitis and yellow fever."

> "Masataka Mori, Professor of History at Shizuoka University in Japan, who has studied Japan's World War II biological warfare program, called Unit 731 for many years, "believed that Japan's biological warfare program was not investigated because 'Unit 731's scientists were granted immunity in return for sharing the fruits of their research with the Americans."
>
> "In Pyongyang "The Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum contains exhibitions of civilian victims of the Korean war, children hideously scarred by chemical weapons – in 1951 the US military was using 70,000 gallons of napalm every day. The exhibition also contains an original of the report issued in Peking in 1952 by the International Scientific Commission for the Investigation of the Facts Concerning Bacterial Warfare in Korea and China, set up by the Helsinki-based World Peace Council. Begun after Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai sent a telegram on March 8, 1952 to the Secretariat of the United Nations detailing claims of 448 germ warfare sorties over China by the US Air Force, the Commission's report was compiled by experts from Sweden, France, Italy, Brazil and Russia, as well as Dr. Joseph Needham, a distinguished British authority on Chinese science."

Among the report's specific case studies, one describes more than 700 voles infected with plague found in the Kan-Nan district of China in April 1952, including on rooftops and haystacks, soon after a US aircraft had been seen passing overhead. In another, the following month a young woman is said to have found a straw package containing clams on a hillside close to Dai-Dong, North Korea. She took the shells home and cooked them; by the end of the following day, both the woman and her husband were dead from cholera. A search of the hillside, close to a reservoir turned up several more packages of the infected clams. The Commission stated its belief that the aircraft that had been heard circling before the packages were found had been attempting to drop the clams into the reservoir to infect it. Some of the species of insects found during the conflict had never been seen in this part of Asia before – the illnesses they brought with them were equally unheard of.

> ‘In light of these and similar facts, the report concluded, the Commission has no option but to conclude that the American Air Force was employing in Korea methods very similar to, if not identical with, those employed to spread plague by the Japanese during the Second World War.”

The use of germ warfare is a violation of the Geneva conventions. Just as The People’s Republic of China, in 1950, desperately needed peace to rebuild the country after the ravages of the Japanese invasion and the decades-long savage crimes committed by the fascist regime of the US supported Chiang Kai-chek, the Korean War began. In the United States, the psychotically anti-communist tyranny of Senator Joseph McCarthy was destroying freedom of thought in America, and destroying millions of lives of U.S. citizens during the Anti-Communist scourge that shamed and devastated America’s so-called democracy. It was obvious and inevitable that the Chinese thought the Americans were using Korea as a base to invade the People’s Republic of China, and return America’s murderous anti-communist puppet, Chiang Kai-chek, to power in China.

The noble widow of China’s first President, Sun Yat-sen, the gifted and idealistic Soong Ching-ling, denounced US intervention in Korea, and exposed America’s use of germ warfare in Korea and North-East China. As a delegate to the Congress of Peoples for Peace in Vienna, alongside Berthold Brecht, Jean Paul Sartre, Ilya Ehrenburg and other illustrious delegates convened from throughout the world, Madame Sun Yat-sen accused the United States of using Korea as a springboard in America’s attempt to destroy the communist government of the People’s Republic of China, in order to restore the hated Chiang Kai-chek to power.

Madame Sun Yat-sen was a paragon of moral and intellectual integrity, and her denunciation of the US use of germ warfare against Korea and China is the most courageous, damning and incriminating testimony exposing the genocidal intent toward North Korea, and toward the People’s Republic of China. Had the US been able to “roll back” communism in China, it would have required a genocide of the largest population in Asia. As they say, it is not over until it is over, and the UN sanctions against tiny North Korea are perpetrating the genocide of the Korean people, one of the few remaining socialist countries in the world. What will be next?

Where is United Nations transparency and accountability? The impact of UN sanctions on the people of the DPRK, currently marked “confidential” and only available to the sanctions committee secretariat in the Department of Political Affairs, should be immediately made public. Failing that, the possibility cannot be excluded that the UN is complicit in genocide.

Valerie Amos’ presentation showed photos of what appeared to be North Korean infants. She informed us that these were not newly born infants, but in fact were at least two years old each, and as a result of malnutrition were unable to develop beyond the stage of infancy. UN sanctions against North Korea are abetting the extermination of the North Korean people. That country has chosen a different way of life, and a different economic system. The west is determined to engineer the failure of their economic system. Where is the famous democracy – freedom of thought, freedom of choice in all of this? In view of its tragic history, as the victimized springboard for the US attempt to attack and destroy the communist government in China, North Korea's desperate determination to defend itself with nuclear weapons is understandable. After all, in the 1950's the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and General MacArthur took a remarkably promiscuous, and,

indeed, psychopathic attitude toward the use of atomic bombs as aggressive weapons against Korea and the People's Republic of China, countries which had never attacked the United States, and clearly had no intention to do so..

It is deplorable that the "international community" refuses to acknowledge all this. It is likely that if the UN made public those "confidential" files, which may conceal multiple scandals and possibly crimes, the "international community" and their collaborative media would be forced to confront the truth about deceptive talk of "democracy" and "human rights." The attempt to identify and equate democracy with capitalism and predatory neo-liberalism is an Orwellian prevarication that has been used to manipulate too many people to their own detriment, and for too long. Below is a list of links for further reading on sanctions:

- Humanitarian groups suffering under North Korea sanctions

https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/humanitarian-groups-suffering-under-north-korea-sanctions/article37617830/

- Korea, like Serbia, Iraq, Libya. But nuclear!

http://www.defenddemocracy.press/korea-like-serbia-iraq-libya-but-nuclear/

- Why do Russia and China not oppose sanctions on the DPRK more?

https://www.facebook.com/JLeftistArchive/photos/a.1922050888117037.1073741828.1921706061484853/1940582556263870/?type=3&permPage=1

- Chinese ships spotted selling oil to North Korea

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2017/12/26/2017122601156.html

- Chinese firm smuggles missile parts to North Korea

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2017/09/19/2017091900988.html?related_all

- North Korea calls latest UN sanctions 'an act of war'

https://amp.cnn.com/cnn/2017/12/24/politics/north-korea-un-resolution-response/index.html

- North Korean response to UN sanctions

http://www.cbc.ca/beta/news/world/north-korea-response-un-snctions-1.4464107

- Why China and Russia continue to pass UN sanctions resolutions against North Korea

https://www.facebook.com/ImperialMilitaryWatch.Analysis/posts/1897112317275463

- North Korea and the UN sanctions merry go-around

https://journal-neo.org/2017/09/17/north-korea-and-the-un-sanctions-merry-go-round/

- UN sanctions leave North Korean drug maker on life support

https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-n-sanctions-leave-north-korean-drug-maker-on-life-support-1512729000

- "Serious concern" about sanctions' impact on North Korea aid work: UN DPRK rep https://www.nknews.org/2017/12/serious-concern-about-sanctions-impact-on-north-korea-aid-work-un-dprk-rep/?c=1512654806814

- Tokyo & Washington to limit North Korean access to oil

https://www.rt.com/business/401457-us-japan-north-korea-oil/

- DPRK doctor states that sanctions are putting childrens' lives at risk

https://www.facebook.com/PRESSTV/videos/1732744936767286/?hc_ref=ARQodwscBdMGd6gXmH8BvMVXHUExtsMHLKxbf3BJ54yyKv24ypUAUtQSp36-kBU0CwI

- Report: North Korea faces fertilizer shortage due to China coal sanctions

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/05/05/Report-North-Korea-faces-fertilizer-shortage-due-to-China-coal-sanctions/3391493997741/

- The economy of the DPRK: myth and reality

http://writetorebel.com/2017/03/28/the-economy-of-the-dprk-myth-and-reality/

- Genocide by sanctions: UN double standards pertaining to sanctions and their devestating impacts

https://www.globalresearch.ca/north-korea-un-double-standards-pertaining-to-sanctions-and-their-devastating-social-impacts/5364484

- US sanctions against the DPRK - a North Korean perspective

https://www.nknews.org/2017/08/new-u-s-sanctions-against-the-dprk-a-north-korean-perspective/

- US representatives pass harshest sanctions ever against North Korea

https://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/US-Reps-Pass-Harshest-Sanctions-Ever-Against-North-Korea-20171025-0006.html

- Is the United states credible as a guarantor of international peace and security?

https://gowans.wordpress.com/2016/05/31/is-the-united-states-credible-as-a-guarantor-of-international-peace-and-security/

- Why UN sanctions against North Korea are wrong

https://gowans.wordpress.com/2016/03/06/why-un-sanctions-against-north-korea-are-wrong/

- It's just a sanction, bro!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stT-yhxFinA

- Report: 49 countries have been busting sanctions on North Korea

http://money.cnn.com/2017/12/06/news/north-korea-sanctions-countries-violation/index.html

- N Korea opens international trade fair amid new UN sanctions

https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2017/09/a99ececc3d3e-update1-n-korea-opens-international-trade-fair-amid-new-un-sanctions.html

And on top of all of that, contemporary imperialism against the DPRK hasn't slowed down, especially as of recent. Below are examples of what I am referring to. The amount of information is limitless, really:

- Most things you hear about North korea are racist nonsense
- The weaponization of Human rights as a means of the imperialists to undermine DPRK
- Why the west wants the workers party of korea out? Rare earth minerals in one of the anwsers
- How the cia and western media dechived the world into thinking that north korea is a dictatorship

- Youtube censorship and deletion of pro-dprk chanels. So much for western freedom of speach.
- Why privilege discourse predominates: Case on DPRK

western academics complained about this event, stating that these channels gave a view you could not see in western media, helping them form opinions
South korean army killed person swimming back to DPRK

- Reality and hypocrisy: DPRK nuclear tests condemned by the nuclear powers
- North korea and UN propaganda machine
- Human rights imperialist campaigns. Who are they fooling?
- The dangerous tone of US media towards DPRK
- Christian missionary spies send to DPRK by US.
- The racist, dehumanization of North korea
- On the DPRK: Isolated, demonazied, and dehumanized by the west
- Alek singley: An imperialist agent
- Darwin, an imperialist bastion of US in Australia
- Botswana leaders, nothing more that imperialist puppets working to undermine socialism
- Israel calls for quick responce against DPRK. Once again, their imperialist nature is shown
- According to Israel, the axis of evil, is Iran-Syria-DPRK. According to them, they are the worst threat for the world. For this only, all of us should support these three states unconditionally
- Understanding and defending DPRK
- DPRK punished for helping to liberate africa
- Brazen american imperialist aggresion
- Genocide by sanctions: UN double standarts
- The real reason US is worried about Koreas ICBM test
- US bans entry to south korean anti-war activists
- Media complicity increases possibility of a new korean war
- Imperialism's drive to war in korea
- US degenarate old bastard threats DPRK with extinction
- What is the US military presence close to DPRK?
- Tillerson talks of pre-emptive strines on DPRK
- US aggresion after park government
- Dangerous tune of South korea
- 300000 troops under pentagon command ready to attack dprk
- How are koreans in Japan treated?
- South's plan to assassinate Kim jong un
- "North korea should be destroyed"
- Pentagon:Ground invasion to destroy DPRK nuclear program
- Better a million dead north korea ex US army official said....You can understand now, that US army is nothing more than some paid murderers with approvement
- Kim jong un Decapitation unit of South korea army

- The Interview’ in historical perspective: endless war against North Korea
- Korean crisis:1994-present
- One of the reasons CIA targets DPRK is opium
- Human rights watch, an imperialist tool part 2 {Part 2}
- UN report could be about US or ROK
- UN report a propaganda tool
- Was otto warmbier tortured?
- This is from comrade u/Prettygame4Ausername The otto warmbier case
- US image of DPRK is not reality

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION FOR THE KOREAN PENINSULA

The Korean War was the seminal event of the Cold War in Asia. By invoking containment of communism to deal with the outbreak of war on the peninsula, the United States carried the Truman Doctrine into Asia. Japan became the key U.S. military ally in Asia, Chinese intervention in Korea sealed U.S.-China enmity for the next thirty years, and Korea stayed divided without a peace treaty. At one and the same time, war in Korea drew Asia into the orbit of vital U.S. interests and strengthened the U.S. commitment to Europe's primacy. The war rigidified ideological positions and ensured that the East-West geopolitical struggle would go on for many years. As importantly, the ensuing big-power confrontation in Vietnam, in which the United States and China tangled by proxy, represented a straight line from Korea. These two conflicts directly or indirectly enveloped nearly all of Asia, forcing governments to choose sides in the Cold War competition. While the war and it's events are well documented here, something which hasn't yet been covered is reconstructive efforts after the war. We will now detail reconstructive efforts across the Korean Peninsula.

A. RECONSTRUCTION FOR THE NORTH

In the reconstruction of Pyongyang, as in the North Korean economy more generally, fraternal assistance was massive, diverse, and crucial. At the time, this help was warmly and extensively acknowledged in the DPRK media. After the 1960s, when self-reliance became both the dominant slogan and the lens through which all previous North Korean experiences were filtered, the role of foreigners in post-war reconstruction was rarely if ever mentioned. Broadly speaking, China contributed mainly manpower and light consumer goods, the Soviets and East Germans supplied technical assistance and supervision, and the other East European countries gave equipment and technical assistance for specific industries. Kim Il Sung publicly thanked the Chinese People's Volunteers, who had fought "shoulder-to-shoulder" with the Korean People's Army, for their continued role in the post-war reconstruction effort. CPV soldiers helped rebuild bridges, elementary schools, factories and apartments. In February 1955, for instance, the 47th Brigade of the CPV rebuilt the Pyongyang Electric Train Factory. A group of more than 770 Chinese construction experts stayed in Pyongyang from November 1954 to the end of 1956 to help oversee reconstruction. Albania donated asphalt for paving roads, Czechoslovakia gave buses, Hungary built a precision tool factory, East Germany gave telephones and switchboards for the city's communication services and modernized the National Film Production Center. Poland built the West Pyongyang Railway Factory, Bulgaria built a factory for wooden tools, Romania built up Pyongyang Central Hospital, and the USSR, Czechoslovakia, China and East Germany each contributed engines and freight and passenger cars to develop the North Korean railroad industry. During the period of the Three-Year plan, many East European leaders visited Pyongyang, where they were warmly thanked for their countries' contributions to post-war reconstruction, including Otto Grotewohl of the GDR, Enver Hoxha of Albania, and Gheorghiu-Dej of România.

In the face of the Chinese advance in late November and December 1950, the US Army X Corps withdrew toward the Hamhŭng/Hŭngnam area to be evacuated by sea. Hamhŭng had already been bombed by the US Air Force, but the X Corps had been ordered to "deny the

Communist troops supplies and transportation facilities" before they left the area. For several days, beginning December 11, the 185th Engineering Battalion of X Corps hauled some four tons of dynamite to the industrial outskirts of Hŭngnam and began to destroy what remained of the factories. On December 15, the railroad bridge leading south from Hamhŭng was blown up. All the highway bridges in the vicinity were similarly demolished. Three days later, the First Platoon burned all the buildings and destroyed all aviation supplies at Hamhŭng's Yongp'o airport, about five miles south of Hŭngnam, with gasoline, tracer bullets and grenades; for good measure, a naval bombardment hit the airport later that afternoon. Meanwhile, some 100,000 North Korean refugees were transported from Hŭngnam to South Korea by US navy LST's in the so-called "Christmas Evacuation" of December 19 – 24. Out of the rubble of a destroyed and depopulated Hamhŭng, the North Koreans and East Germans built a new industrial city.

It is not clear exactly when, and by whom, the decision was made for East German aid to focus on the city of Hamhŭng. It appears that GDR Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl personally promised Kim Il Sung help in rebuilding a city when the two men met at the Geneva Conference in 1954. Later that year, in late June or early July, a North Korean leader (presumably Kim Il Sung) wrote to Grotewohl:

> *"The government and the whole Korean people are endlessly touched and thankful for the promise given by you, dear comrade Prime Minister, to our delegation at the Geneva Conference, to rebuild one of the destroyed towns by the efforts of the German Democratic Republic…The government of our Republic has decided as the object of reconstruction and recovery by your government the city of Hamhŭng, one of the provincial centers of our Republic." [Cited in Ruediger Frank, Die DDR und Nordkorea: Dier Wiederaufbau der Stadt Hamhung von 1954 – 1962 (Aachen: Shaker, 1996), p. 23]*

Perhaps Grotewohl, presiding over a war-damaged country himself, was moved by a sense of common bond with the Koreans; perhaps he was pressured by the Soviets to give East German aid to a major industrial reconstruction project, but not in the capital, which would be a showcase of Soviet aid. In any case, Grotewohl himself headed a "German Work Team" (Deutsche Arbeitsgruppe, DAG) to direct the project. Hundreds of East German engineers, technicians, craftsmen and their families were sent to Hamhŭng, some residing for several years, and gained the collective, ironically German-sounding nickname "Hamhunger." In the fall of 1954 a GDR delegation visited Hamhŭng to lay the groundwork for the reconstruction project, and the following year the East German government announced its plan to help in the reconstruction of Hamhŭng for the period 1955 – 1964.

In just over five years, North Koreans with East German assistance rebuilt Hamhung as a modern industrial city, and for decades the city would be the main industrial hub of North Korea outside the capital Pyongyang. In 1960 – long before the term would be applied to South Korea – the East German press called North Korea "an economic miracle in the Far East" (Martin Radmann, "Ein Wirtschafstwunder im Fernen Osten," Neues Deutschland, December 27, 1960). In June 1956, Kim Il Sung visited the GDR and personally thanked the East Germans for their help (GDR Foreign Ministry, Korea section. "Visit of a Government Delegation of the DPRK in the GDR, June 1956." MfAA A 6927, Fiche 1). But from the beginning of the reconstruction process, the DPRK leadership had seen foreign assistance as a limited process that would gradually give way to North Korean self-reliance (Kim Il Sung, "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work," Works vol. 9, pp. 395 – 417). In December 1955 Kim made his subsequently famous speech about "Juche" or self −reliance, Originally referring to ideological independence, especially with regard to the Soviet Union, over the course of the next two decades Juche would be extended to all aspects of North Korean behavior, from politics to economics to military defense. The DPRK and GDR governments declared the Hamhŭng project completed in 1962, two years ahead of schedule. The German specialists and their families went home. At the same time, the thousands of Korean orphans taken in by German, Romanian, and other East European families, were sent back to Korea. Some North Korean students remained in Eastern Europe and the USSR, but the era of close "fraternal cooperation" had come to an end. North Korea had been rebuilt, and from this point onward would chart its own distinct course of political and economic development, connected but never subordinated to the broader socialist community of nations.

In NKIDP Working Paper #4,"China and the Post-War Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953-1961," written by Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia systematically assess the extent and significance of Chinese assistance to North Korea after the Korean War. In addition to examining North Korea's development following the Korean War armistice, Professors Shen and Xia rely on their expertise of Sino-Soviet relations to draw larger conclusions about North Korea in the Cold War and how the DPRK navigated both the honeymoon period and subsequent schism between China and the Soviet Union. Relying on ample documentation from the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive, provincial Chinese archives, and the archives of the former Soviet Union, Shen and Xia argue that:

1. - Chinese aid to North Korea was equal to, or even surpassed, Soviet assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the 1950s and 1960s;
2. - North Korea's successful post-war reconstruction—and ability to outpace South Korea's economic development until the early 1970s—was in large measure due to the "fraternal support," or foreign aid, offered by China and other socialist countries;
3. - North Korea capitalized upon both the initial Sino-Soviet honeymoon and the emerging Sino-Soviet split to extract economic concessions from China and the Soviet Union;
4. - While Sino-North Korean relations were not always "as close as lips to teeth," and were in fact volatile during various periods of time, the trade and economic relationship between China and North Korea remained relatively stable in the period under study.

Thirteen translated documents from Chinese archives are appended to NKIDP Working Paper #4, allowing scholars and students to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanics of Chinese-North Korean relations in the 1950s and 1960s. This is a valuable resource for anyone interested in further understanding reconstruction efforts in the DPRK. Furthermore, below is a list of 13 links on Chinese reconstructive efforts with the DPRK:

- DOCUMENT NO. 1

Mao Zedong's Remarks at the Banquet for the [North] Korean Government Delegation, 23 November 1953

- DOCUMENT NO. 2

Agreement on Korean Technical Personnel Receiving Training in China and Chinese Technical Personnel Working in Korea
Made by the Governments of the People's Republic of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 23 November 1953

- DOCUMENT NO. 3

CCP Central Committee Propaganda Instructions for the Signing of the Sino-Korean Economic and Cultural Cooperation Agreement, 10 December 1953

- DOCUMENT NO. 4

Additional Notification from the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee on the Issue of Political Examinations for Persons Receiving Training Abroad and Technical Personnel Aiding Korea, 21 April 1954

- DOCUMENT NO. 5

Li Fuchun's Report on Sino-Korean Trade Negotiations, 30 September 1957
DOCUMENT NO. 6
Li Fuchun's Report on Sino-Korean Trade Negotiations, 4 October 1957

- DOCUMENT NO. 7

Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Soviet Ambassador Yudin (Excerpt), 8 January 1958

- DOCUMENT NO. 8

Minutes of Conversation between Zhang Wentian and Pavel Yudin (Excerpt), 23 January 1958

- DOCUMENT NO. 9

Reference Materials for the Sino-Korean Negotiations on Supplying Equipment and Constructing Power Plants, 5 August 1958

- DOCUMENT NO. 10

Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Kim Il Sung, 22 November 1958

- DOCUMENT NO. 11

Summary Report on Organizing Ethnic Koreans and Mobilizing Korean Immigrants to go to Korea to Take Part in
Construction, 10 December 1959

- DOCUMENT NO. 12

Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Kim Il Sung, 11 July 1961

- DOCUMENT NO. 13

Minutes of Conversation between Zhou Enlai and DPRK Vice Premier Ri Ju-yeon, 13 December 1961

RECONSTRUCTION FOR THE SOUTH / THE 2ND OCCUPATION OF KOREA

Amidst the chaos surrounding North Korea's military offensive in the summer of 1950, the United Nations Security Council passed a series of resolutions which gave the United States-led United Nations Command (UNC) sanction to occupy the Korean peninsula. A crucial element of the work of this occupation – the second of southern Korea since 1945 – dealt with refugees. The first American occupation lasted from 1945 to 1948; US troops withdrew in 1949, a year after they fostered-into-being the newly-established Republic of Korea. One can trace the history of the US-led United Nations Command occupation of Korea until at least the signing of the armistice in July 1953. In a broader sense, however, the second occupation has not ended, since American soldiers remain in South Korea to this day and US forces command South Korean troops. This article examines the first year of the US-United Nations Command occupation of the Korean peninsula, specifically the role of the United Nations Civil Assistance Command, Korea, in that history. By August 1950, as the territory under United Nations Command jurisdiction shrank and came to centre around the Kyŏngsang provinces, South Korean authorities reported that the northern advance had displaced well over one million people. As part of the effort to deal with the refugee situation in South Korea, the Security Council passed a resolution on 31 July 1950 that provided the framework for the "relief" operations of the United Nations Command. The Council approved the resolution several weeks after American soldiers had committed a mass killing of up to several hundred Korean civilians at Nogŭn-ri and in the wake of mass killings of suspected Communists by the South Korean authorities, but the Council framed the refugee tragedy solely in relation to the North Korean offensive. Pointing to the "hardships and privations to which the people of Korea are being subjected as a result of the continued prosecution by the North Korean forces of their unlawful attack", the Council called on UN and non-governmental organizations to "provide such assistance as the Unified Command may request for the relief and support of the civilian population of Korea, and as appropriate in connection with the responsibilities being carried out by the Unified Command on behalf of the Security Council" (The text of Security Council Resolution 85 is available here).

In the aftermath of the Security Council resolution, in early September, the UNC established a Public Health and Welfare Section under the authority of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) to assist with military operations, advise General Douglas MacArthur on relief policy, and act as liaison with non-military bodies, United Nations and otherwise, dealing with public health in Korea. At the time, a small number of US Army public health and welfare officers operated in Korea, conducting civil affairs work in conjunction with the Economic Cooperation Administration and the Department of State (National Archives of Canada, United Nations Command, "Civilian Relief and Economic Aid - Korea", 7 July – 30 September 1951, prepared by the GHQ, UNC, p. 9; United States National Archives (henceforth USNA), RG 407 Box 1995, General Order No. 5, 2 September 1950). The scale of their work, needless to say, was monumental. After conducting surveys, American soldiers estimated there were 300,000 refugees in the Pusan perimeter, the area controlled by the United Nations Command and occupying most of the North and South Kyŏngsang provinces. Many of the refugees were located along the line of fighting or just south of it. The soldiers were thus fighting amidst refugees – a situation that had led to the No Gŭn-ri massacres in July.

By September, South Korean health authorities had established their presence in the refugee camps within the Pusan perimeter. Their work far outweighed the initial efforts of the US soldiers connected with "relief" operations. In an effort to gain some control over the refugee situation, American soldiers established formal channels of communication with Korean officials, formed small "public health, welfare and sanitation teams" for Pusan and Taegu, attempted to determine the basic material and health needs of the refugees, and worked to exert greater political influence on the refugee and public health programs of the Republic of Korea (ROK). To achieve the latter objective, US army officers soon joined the ROK government's Central Refugee Relief Committee, which was then sometimes referred to as the Central Joint Refugee Relief Committee. The committee was formally responsible for assessing the needs of the civilian population and managing the Korean relief program. The addition of the word "Joint" to the name of the committee was an important change, as the new administrative arrangements gave civil assistance officers significant influence over the politics of the relief effort, and led to a sharing of political sovereignty between the American army and the Korean government on a broad range of matters linked to the health and welfare of the Korean population. As I. H. Markuson, the Chief of the Welfare Division of the Army's Public Health and Welfare Section noted in 1951, American military participation on the joint committee "did not reduce or compromise the authority vested in United Nations Command personnel for responsibility for the total [relief] program, but provided a method by which the Korean government and the UNC personnel could arrive at decisions jointly" (USNA, RG 407, Box 4995, "Staff Section Report, Public Welfare Section" for the period 5 September 1950 to 31 August 1951, p. 6). American representation on the Central Joint Refugee Relief Committee was thus one example of the many ways in which UNC military operations during the war encroached on the sovereignty of the Republic. Indeed, a major withering away of Korean sovereignty had already occurred in July 1950 when the Syngman Rhee government agreed to subordinate the command of its armed forces to General MacArthur and the UNC in Tokyo, a decision which effectively established a de facto American protectorate over the Republic.

While the politics of the relief effort were worked out in favour of joint UNC-ROK sovereignty, the UNC firmly managed the civilian public health officials operating in Korea. In late September, in the aftermath of the Inchŏn landings, two doctors from the World Health Organization (WHO), Walter Crichton and Henry Meyer, arrived in Pusan. Dr. Crichton wanted to establish a UN public health presence in Korea relatively independent of the American army. Over the course of the fall of 1950, however, the American-appointed commanders of the civil assistance programs ordered Crichton and other officials from UN agencies and non-governmental organizations to be absorbed into the UNC civil assistance program (Ibid., "Staff Section Report, Public Health Section", for the period 5 September 1950 to 31 August 1951). Non-military officials could shape policy at lower levels, but could not determine overall strategy. There was thus no independent UN public health oversight in Korea. The work of the Public Health and Welfare teams expanded tremendously as a result of the UNC offensive across the thirty-eighth parallel. Surveys done after the crossing of the 38th parallel indicated that there were about 1.8 million refugees in South Korea, along with about one million more in the north. In the ROK, about 250,000 houses had been lost in the fighting. Food shortages existed throughout the peninsula. Even when grain reached Pusan to be trans-shipped to UNC-held areas, military supplies retained first priority on the limited transport network, so refugees had to wait for adequate transportation to be arranged. When the first shipment of rice reached the outskirts of Seoul in October, several hundred Korean labourers carried it on their backs to the Han River, where it was shipped and later carted by more labourers to the city centre. Throughout the country there were significant shortages of fuel and clothing, a situation that only got worse with the coming of winter and the Communist counter-offensives.

Entering the war zone in the north, civil assistance teams discovered widespread destruction and suffering. They noted that the northern population was not yet afflicted with disease – in North Korea there had been fairly widespread inoculations against typhoid and smallpox – but due to destruction of medical facilities, northern Korea now lacked capacity to provide basic medical care for the sick, wounded, and dying. Travelling to P'yŏngyang in late October, Dr. Crichton found "considerable destruction of medical establishments". He also pointed to an "urgent need" for medical assistance in Sariwon, "where the city was almost completely destroyed." In areas north of the 38th parallel, where the United States and United Nations did not formally recognize the legitimacy of the Republic of Korea, civil assistance teams took on responsibility for the formation of local government. Since American civil affairs doctrine required the employment of local persons in governmental activities, US soldiers selected former North Korean communist officials to establish local governments-in-being. These very rudimentary political organizations, put together in the immediate aftermath of the devastating ROK-UNC counter-offensive, provided extremely limited services, but were meant to lay the groundwork for the longer term "reconstruction" of the Korean peninsula. For the public health teams, however, the acute shortages of food and medical supplies soon contributed to devastating outbreaks of typhus: as people sought alternative sources of food, especially rodents, they became susceptible to the bites of fleas infected with the bacteria that causes the disease. In the North, even 64 years later, bombs are still being dug up.

In line with the UNC counter-offensive and plans for the occupation of all of Korea, the American Army clarified its lines of authority vis-à-vis United Nations health workers and other civilian officials. On 19 October 1950, the UNC reaffirmed that "over-all responsibility and authority for civilian relief and support in Korea, as well as for the conduct of military operations, is placed in the Unified Command, Washington, and is further delegated to the Unified Command, Tokyo. In late October and early November, the UNC ordered a major reorganization of the army's Public Health Section. SCAP ordered most of the soldiers working in the existing Public Health and Welfare teams out of Korea. Their operations would be replaced by new civil assistance teams working under the direction of the American Eighth Army, particularly the newly-created "UN Public Health and Welfare Field Organization" and the Eighth Army detachment linked to it, the 8201st Army Unit. In December, these organizations became known respectively as the UN Civil Assistance Command, Korea (UNCACK), and the 8201st Army Unit, UNCACK. While the UNC adopted the name "United Nations" in its civil assistance and affairs activities, policy remained the privilege of American soldiers working in the field or operating in consultation with Korean authorities. "United Nations" civil affairs operations thus reflected the broader reality underlying the war, that the United States, and especially the American military, not the United Nations or South Korea, dominated the strategic decision-making processes associated with the conflict.

Theoretically, there was a difference between civil affairs and civil assistance, the latter involving work with a sovereign state, and the former involving formal military government operations in the absence of recognized state authority. With the surrender of ROK control over its military to the UNC, however, war zones in South Korea were in reality under the control of American-UNC authority. Of course, even in military zones south of the 38th parallel there was some shared sovereignty, and occasionally American civil assistance authorities recognized the distinction, noting for example, that their work involved advising ROK authorities. In practice, however, the differences between civil affairs and civil assistance broke down. US military authorities, for example, were the ones who determined movement of people back to former military zones, and this meant that Koreans could not return to their homes or jobs without first obtaining the consent of the UNC. When the UNC determined the time was appropriate, South Korean officials returned to their posts in areas that previously had been classified war zones. The ROK government's sovereignty, in short, was greatly compromised by the wartime situation and by American military decision-making during the war. Writing in 1951, Major Arthur Dodson of UNCACK pointed out that the civil affairs organization was initially structurally unsound "as it failed to provide minimum requirements of personnel to cope with the mission assigned". Rather than placing emphasis on civil affairs, Dodson argued, "an organization similar to a military government group would have been more adequate. The present organization of UNCACK, in many ways, has assumed the semblance of this type unit" (Ibid., "Staff Section Report, S1 Section", for the period 15 October to 31 August 1951).

Despite the implied meaning of the phrase "civil" assistance", military authorities held a monopoly on relief work. During the fall and winter of 1950-1951, American soldiers, in both public and private policy statements, reiterated the UNC civil assistance objective to "prevent disease, starvation and unrest." Although UNCACK pamphlets emphasized humanitarian aspects of relief assistance, the major objectives of UNCACK were strategically linked to the violence of war: to prevent refugees from "interfering" in military campaigns. According to the philosophy underpinning civil assistance, refugees ill from their travails might spread diseases not only to civilians but also to soldiers; or they might turn to acts of "banditry" to survive, force a re-allocation of human and material resources away from the main enemy, and become a danger to both civilians and combatants. Fighting "bandits" either in war zones or behind battle lines therefore became an ancillary activity linked to civil affairs teams. The object was not only to separate possible guerrillas from refugees, but also to prevent discontented civilians from "destabilizing" military operations by being recruited by enemy soldiers or guerrillas. US soldiers distinguished between "bandits" and "guerrillas" by linking the latter with communism, though in practice both were seen as threats to civil affairs operations, and the UNC and civil affairs authorities coordinated their anti-guerrilla and anti-bandit operations with Korean army and civil police officials, often getting Korean soldiers and police assigned to this sort of combat duty behind the front lines.

Civil affairs operations were designed to support the movements and battle strategies of UNC armies. In particular, they tried to prevent refugees from entering into so-called "battle zones". Another major goal of the teams was to stop refugees from travelling on Main Supply Routes, or MSRs, roads soldiers travelled on or which were used to supply UNC units. Civil assistance teams set up roadblocks or authorized Korean police and military units to interdict refugees, in a broader effort to separate soldiers and civilians. Given the timing of the emergence of UNCACK, in the months after September 1950, the creation of the unit was an explicit recognition of the bloody consequences of civilians mixing with soldiers. The emphasis of civil assistance was not to stop soldiers from firing on or toward civilians, but to prevent civilians from hindering military offensives and other activities, an important distinction which reflected the acceptance of violence toward civilians underlying UNC relief programs. Refugees were viewed not so much as a group to be protected, but as a "problem" for civil assistance teams. A booklet issued by the United Nations Command entitled “Civil Assistance in Korea” stated in its opening paragraph that refugees presented “a constant problem to civil assistance" (USNA, RG 407, Box 1214, “Civil Assistance in Korea”, Far Eastern Command, June 1951) The logic of this strategy fed a perception that civilians moving in war-zones were legitimate military targets for US and other UNC soldiers.

In late 1950 and early 1951, as a result of the UNC and Chinese-North Korean offensives, several million more refugees were added to those already fleeing the warring armies. By mid-1951, there were 4.4 million refugees in South Korea alone, out of a population of about 21 million. With the evacuation of Seoul in late December and early January 1950-1951, 600,000 left the city. Unlike the first occupation of Seoul in the summer of 1950, the population abandoned the city. In December and January, UNCACK units again turned to prevent the movement of refugees into battle areas. As the Civil Assistance Command report for January 1951 pointed out, UNCACK activities “centered around the control of the civilian population in order to prevent its interference with military operations.” The report spoke of “vigorous enforcement” of policy and noted that “No refugees were permitted to cross our lines” (USNA, RG 407, Box 1150, “Command Report”, Civil Assistance Headquarters, January 1951). The use of leaflet drops from planes and psychological warfare operations were described as achieving “considerable success”. The leaflets, of which more than 100,000 were dropped in front of the American I and IX Corps, stated, presumably in Korean, that the movement of refugees was forbidden and that civilians should “return to your homes or move off roads to the hills and remain there. Any persons or columns moving toward the United Nations Forces will be fired upon.” Nothing was said about refugee casualties, but throughout the month Korean civilians were treated violently. The Chinese intervention had caused many more refugees to settle in Pusan and Taegu, and the UNC ordered that refugees be cleared from these cities and the areas and MSR’s immediately surrounding them. UNCACK worked with officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs as well as police authorities to move the refugees. According to UNCACK reports, when refugees refused to move, “Police action was used to clean out make shift camps.” In Pusan, refugees were briefly “moved by force” to Cheju and Koje islands. When some Korean authorities became reluctant to continue forcing refugees to leave for the islands, the movement was temporarily halted. The experience taught civil affairs officials not that care should be used to treat refugees, but that, in addition to needing official Korean support, “only force would succeed in the movement of people against their will when they were concerned about their own safety.” And force continued to be used to move refugees in the spring and summer of 1951, as refugees attempted to move northwards, back to villages, towns and cities, as the military situation stabilized (See Ibid., box 4995, Staff Section Report, Public Welfare Section, UNCACK 5 September 1950-31 August 1951). The army now found a new challenge on its hands, how to keep civilians away from northern areas of southern Korea, especially since removing them southwards only resulted in their moving northwards once again.

The US military occupation of South Korea has largely supported and protected US economic and financial interests in Korea. From the very outset in 1945, there was no democratization of the South Korean economy. The exploitative Japanese factory system was adopted by the Korean business conglomerates, which were in part the outgrowth of the Japanese imperial system. At the outset this system was based on extremely low wages, Korea’s manufacturing base was used to produce cheap labor exports for Western markets, In many respects, the earlier Korean manufacturing base was a form of “industrial colonialism” in derogation of the rights of Korean workers. The rise of the South Korean business conglomerates (Chaebols) was the source of impressive economic growth performance starting in the 1970s. The Chaebols are conglomerates of many companies "clustered around one holding company". The parent company is often controlled by single family or business clan. The latter in turn had close ties to officials in the ROK's military governments. South Korea's industrial and technological revolution constituted a challenge to Western capitalism. Despite US military presence, the ROK was no longer a "developing country" with a "dependent" economy. Inserted into a competitive World market, South Korean capitalism was competing with both Japanese and Western multinationals.

The ROK had developed into a World capitalist power. It had acquired its own technological base, a highly developed banking system; it was categorised by the World Bank as a so-called "Asian tiger". Yet at the same time, the entire political fabric –which included the conduct of macroeconomic policy– was controlled by Washington and Wall Street, not to mention the military presence of US occupation forces. The Asian crisis of 1997 was an important watershed. In late 1997, the imposition of an IMF bailout contributed to plunging South Korea, virtually overnight, into a deep recession. The social impact was devastating. Through financial manipulation of stock markets and foreign exchange markets by major financial actors, the Asian crisis contributed to weakening and undermining the Korean business establishment. The objective was to "tame the tiger", dismantle the Korean business conglomerates, and restore US control and ownership over the Korean economy, its industrial base, its banking system. The collapse of the won in late 1997 was triggered by "naked short selling" on the foreign exchange markets. It was tantamount to an act of economic warfare. Several Korean business conglomerates were fractured, broken up or precipitated into bankruptcy on the orders of the IMF, which was acting on behalf of Wall Street. Of the 30 largest chaebols, 11 collapsed between July 1997 and June 1999. Following the IMF's December 1997 financial bailout, a large part of the Korean national economy, its high tech sectors, its industrial base, was "stolen" by US and Western capital under various fraudulent clauses negotiated by the ROK's creditors. Western corporations had gone on a shopping spree, buying up financial institutions and industrial assets at rock-bottom prices. The devaluation of the won, combined with the slide of the Seoul stock market, had dramatically depressed the dollar value of Korean assets. Acting directly on behalf of Wall Street, the IMF had demanded the dismantling of the Daewoo Group including the sell-off of the 12 so-called troubled Daewoo affiliate companies. Daewoo Motors was up for grabs. This was not a spontaneous bankruptcy, it was the result of financial manipulation, with a view to transferring valuable productive assets into the hands of foreign investors. Daewoo obliged under the IMF agreement to sell off Daewoo Motor to General Motors (GM) in 2001. Similarly, the ROK's largest corporation Hyundai was forced to restructure its holding company following the December 1997 bailout.

In April 1999 Hyundai announced a two-thirds reduction of the number of business units and "a plan to break up the group into five independent business groups". This initiative was part of the debt reduction plan imposed by Western creditors and carried out by the IMF. It was implemented under what was called "the spin-off program" whereby the large Korean business conglomerates were to slated to be downsized and broken up into smaller business undertakings. In the process, many of the high tech units belonging to the large Korean holding companies were bought out by Western capital. South Korea's banking landscape was also taken over by "US investors". Korea First Bank (KFB), with a network of branches all over the country, was purchased at a negative price by the California based Newbridge Group in a fraudulent transaction (See Michel Chossudovsky, The Globalization of Poverty and the New

World Order, Global Research, Montreal, 2003). A similar shady deal enabled the Carlyle Group –whose board of directors included former U.S. President George Herbert Walker Bush (Senior), his Secretary of State James A. Baker III, and former Defense Secretary Frank C. Carlucci — to take control of KorAm Bank in September 2000. KorAm was taken over in a Consortium led by The Carlyle Group in collaboration with JPMorgan Chase. KorAm Bank had been established in the early 1980s as a joint venture between Bank America and a group of Korean conglomerates. Three years later, CitiBank purchased a 36.7 percent stake in KorAm from the Carlyle Group and then bought up all the remaining shares, in what was described as "Citibank's biggest acquisition outside the Western Hemisphere" (See Citibank expands in South Korea – The New York Times, November 2, 2004). Following the 1997 Asian Crisis which triggered a multibillion dollar debt crisis, a new system of government had been established in South Korea, geared towards the fracture of Korea's business conglomerates and the weakening of Korean national capitalism. In other words, the signing of the IMF bailout Agreement in December 1997 marks a significant transformation in the structure of the Korean State, whose regulatory financial agencies were used to serve the interests of Korea's external creditors.

In developing their economy, many have referred to it as "The Miracle on the Han River". The rapid reconstruction and development of the South Korean economy during the latter half of the 20th century was accompanied by events such as the country's successful hosting of the 1988 Summer Olympics and its co-hosting of the 2002 FIFA World Cup, as well as the ascension of family-owned conglomerates known as chaebols, such as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai.

GLOBAL ISOLATIONISM VS THE DPRK

North Korean leadership and its propagandists, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, represented the DPRK as "the vanguard of the Third World, anti-American rejectionist front" in addition to claiming sole governance of the entire Korean peninsula (Bruce Cumings, "The American Century and the Third World," Diplomatic History 23, no. 2 (Spring 1999) , 357). The DPRK presented its struggle for reunification as "identical with the struggle of Third World peoples for independence and completely compatible with 'proletarian internationalism" (Charles K. Armstrong, "Socialism, Sovereignty, and the North Korean Exception," in North Korea: Toward a Better Understanding, ed. Sonia Ryang (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 45). The North Korean leaders and propagandists' portrayal of their country as a model of self-sufficiency and postcolonial development gained significant followers throughout the Third World. North Korea directly aided some of its Third World allies by providing military training and assistance. The BPP's attraction to North Korea grew out of the DPRK leadership's efforts to project the nation as a Third World model. Given the present day reality of North Korea as an "isolated" and impoverished nation, it may seem absurd that the nation could ever have been perceived as a Third World model worthy of emulation. However, from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, North Korea was more prosperous than South Korea and became an industrial power in the communist bloc (Bruce Cumings, North Korea: Another Country (New York: The New Press, 2004), viii-ix, 134-135). In 1965, Joan Robinson, the notable British economist, described the North's economic success as a "Korean Miracle" and argued that South Koreans should be able to choose which part of Korea- the prosperous North or the impoverished South- they wanted to live in (Joan Robinson, "Korean Miracle," Monthly Review 16, no. 8 (January 1965), 541-549). Political scientist Victor Cha explains that, "For the first thirty years after the establishment of two Koreas, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency estimated that North Korean GNP per capita outstripped that of the South" (Victor Cha, An Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future (New York: Harpers Collins Publishers, 2012), 24-25). In addition to North Korea's economic development, Third World revolutionaries were also attracted to the DPRK because the nation successfully fought off two imperialisms defeating the Japanese colonialists and then fighting the United States to a standstill in the Korean War, albeit with the critical support of China and the Soviet Union. As Eldridge Cleaver saw it, the North Koreans defeated Japan, "the monstrous, imperialist force of Asia," and were "the first to bring the U.S. imperialists trembling to their knees" ("1969 Statement from the U.S. People's Anti-Imperialist Delegation to Korea," University of California, Berkeley, The Bancroft Library, BANC MSS 91/213c, The Eldridge Cleaver Papers, 1963-1988, Carton 5, Folder 4). Core leaders of North Korea were guerilla fighters in the 1930s who participated in the anti-Japanese resistance movement in Manchuria. The revolutionary credentials of these guerilla fighters, united around the leadership of Kim Il Sung, eventually earned them high ranking positions in North Korea alongside Soviet advisors. Two years after the official founding of North Korea in 1948, the Korean War began and the North Korean leadership experienced firsthand the power of the U.S. war machine as the United States dropped 635,000 tons of bombs and 32,557 tons of napalm in Korea during the war. In comparison, the United States dropped 503,000 tons of bombs in the whole Pacific Theater during World War II. According to Bruce Cumings, "at least 50 percent of eighteen out of the North's twenty-two major cities were obliterated" (Bruce Cumings, The Korean War: A History (New York: Random House, 2011), 159-160). The North Korean state appealed to many Third World revolutionaries as the nation had literally risen from a guerilla struggle in the mountains of Manchuria and the ashes of the Korean War. Kim Il Sung's revolutionary credentials and experiences confirmed his commitment to anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, and anti-Americanism.

North Korean leaders have supported Third World movements in both symbolic and material ways, most notably in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1969, January 3-10 was proclaimed in the DPRK as "the week of international solidarity for supporting the national-liberation struggle of the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples" ("Militant Solidarity with Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America," The Pyongyang Times (January 6, 1969), 14). In 1976, Kim Il Sung explained his theory of a unified Third World movement. He stated, "The newly emerging forces in Asia, Africa, and Latin America must confront the imperialists' strategy of destruction one by one with the strategy of unity; they must not only solidly unite politically but closely cooperate economically and technologically as well" (Quote from Kim Il Sung cited in Pak In-kun, "U.S. Imperialism is the Outrageous Strangler of National Independence and Sovereign Rights," Kulloja (December 1976), 60). The North Korean government went a step further by training two thousand guerilla fighters from twenty-five countries from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s (See "The Trade in Troublemaking," Time 97, no. 19 (May 10, 1971), 38). Most notably, members of the Japanese Red Army, Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the Official Irish Republican Army received training in North Korea (see John Sweeney, North Korea Undercover: Inside the World's Most Secret State (London: Transworld Publishers, 2013), 201-226).

One of the major reasons why the North Korean government supported foreign revolutionaries is "national solipsism" or the belief that the Korean peninsula is the center of the world (Bruce Cumings, Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 414). As Bruce Cumings suggests, North Korea's "national solipsism" is similar to the Middle Kingdom worldview of ancient China (Cumings, Korea's Place in the Sun, 414). In funding and training Third World revolutionaries, the North Korean leadership sought to position itself as a major force for world revolution. As the North Korean state news agency stated in 1978, "The fame of the Korean Revolution is widely known to the world across the borderline of Korea; it is a beacon of hope, an example of heroism and a great inspiration for all the peoples who want liberation and political independence" ("DPRK Meeting Welcomes African Delegations," Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) (September 14, 1978)). Thus, the North Korean leadership's support of foreign revolutionaries helped on the domestic front as the image of peoples of all races and nationalities visiting North Korea reinforced the portrayal of the DPRK as a paradise and Kim Il Sung as a world leader. The Korea-centered worldview of the DPRK leadership was rooted in the expectation that foreigners who enjoyed its support would revere Kim Il Sung and extol the brilliance of the DPRK's socialist system. Thus, it was a two-way street. As part of the DPRK's "national solipsism," its leaders believed that revolutionaries throughout the world looked to Kim Il Sung for guidance and saw the Korean Revolution as a guide to follow. During the Cultural Revolution, specifically the period 1966-1969, North Korean leaders "refuted Chinese premier Zhou Enlai's claim that China had become the center of world revolution" (Liu Ming, "Changes and Continuities in Pyongyang's China Policy," in North Korea in Transition: Politics, Economy, and Society, eds. Kyung-Ae Park and Scott Snyder (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2013), 216). In 1967, Kim Il Sung ordered the Chinese government to take down propaganda at the North Korean embassy that proclaimed Mao Zedong as "the leader of the peoples of the entire world." The Chinese government refused, explaining "that they would observe the laws of the DPRK which they like and would not observe those which they did not like" ("Document 14: Memo of the Soviet Embassy in the DPRK," (August 5, 1967) in Limits of the 'Teeth and Lips' Alliance: New

Evidence on Sino-DPRK Relations, 1955-1984, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars- NKIDP digital archive (accessed March 18, 2013)). While criticizing their Chinese counterparts as "dogmatists" during the Cultural Revolution, North Korean leaders branded Soviet leaders as revisionists due to Khrushchevite de-Stalinization campaigns in the mid-1950s. As a 1963 article from the Rodong Sinmun, the official organ of the Korean Worker's Party, states, "Some people [referring to the Soviet leadership] are deviating farther from the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism and being bogged deep in the mire of revisionism" ("Let Us Defend the Socialist Camp," Rodong Sinmun (October 28, 1963), 1-2). North Korea's ideological independence from China and the Soviet Union attracted the Panthers and other Third World revolutionaries.

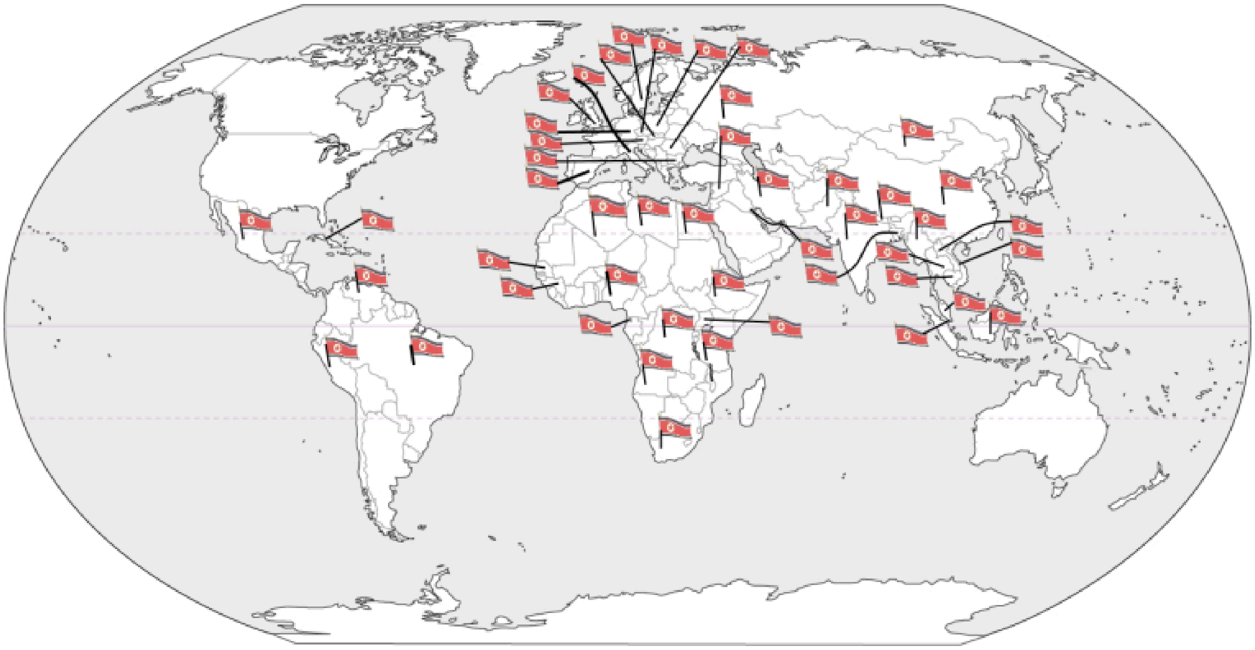
Despite championing national independence and radical self-reliance, North Korea's postwar reconstruction and rapid industrialization rested in part on massive Soviet, Chinese and East European aid. According to Victor Cha, North Korea received over $1.65 billion in aid from the Soviet Union and China in the 1950s (Cha, An Impossible State, 112-113). The North Koreans welcomed this assistance from their socialist allies but were reluctant to admit that their rapid postwar reconstruction was due in part to foreign aid (see Balazs Szalontai, Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953-1964 (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2004)). A 1960 report from the Hungarian Embassy in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry in Budapest explains, "Comrade Puzanov (Soviet ambassador) said that the Soviet Union does not need constant expressions of gratitude for its help but the Korean comrades are displaying too 'modest' behavior concerning their assistance, and they try to hush it up" ("Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry," NKIDP digital archive, December 8, 1960. (accessed April 6, 2013)). The Czechoslovakian ambassador to the DPRK was baffled by North Korea's refusal to properly thank its socialist allies for their assistance in rebuilding the country. The ambassador "remarked that any bourgeois economist can easily calculate that the DPRK was unable to reach its achievements on its own, and it is similarly unable to provide the economic aid it recently offered to South Korea from its own resources" ("Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry," NKIDP Digital Archive.(accessed April 6, 2013)). In 1958, a Hungarian diplomat stated, "The Korean leaders do not appreciate sufficiently the help China gave to them during the Korean War and after the war" (Szalontai, Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era, 131). North Korea's independence was attractive to Third World revolutionaries who appear to have been unaware of the role of Soviet-bloc aid in North Korea's recovery and development.

Hoping to spur a new international order based on mutual assistance amongst small postcolonial nations, the North Korean leadership championed Third Worldism as a revolutionary path to socialist modernity in the 1970s and 1980s. During a Korean Workers' Party meeting in 1986, Kim Il Sung emphasized Third World economic cooperation, stating that, faced with "the threat of ever-worsening hunger and disease, the developing countries ought to pool their efforts and support and cooperate with each other." Kim later added, "If the non-aligned countries and developing countries wage a vigorous struggle together to establish a new fair international economic order, the developed countries will have to comply, in the long run, with the demands of the developing countries whether they like it or not" (Kim Il Sung, "For the Development of the Non-Aligned Movement," Kim Il Sung Selected Works, vol. 40 (Pyongyang, DPRK: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1995), 117-144). In order to assist anti-colonial struggles, the DPRK allocated significant foreign aid and diplomatic resources to

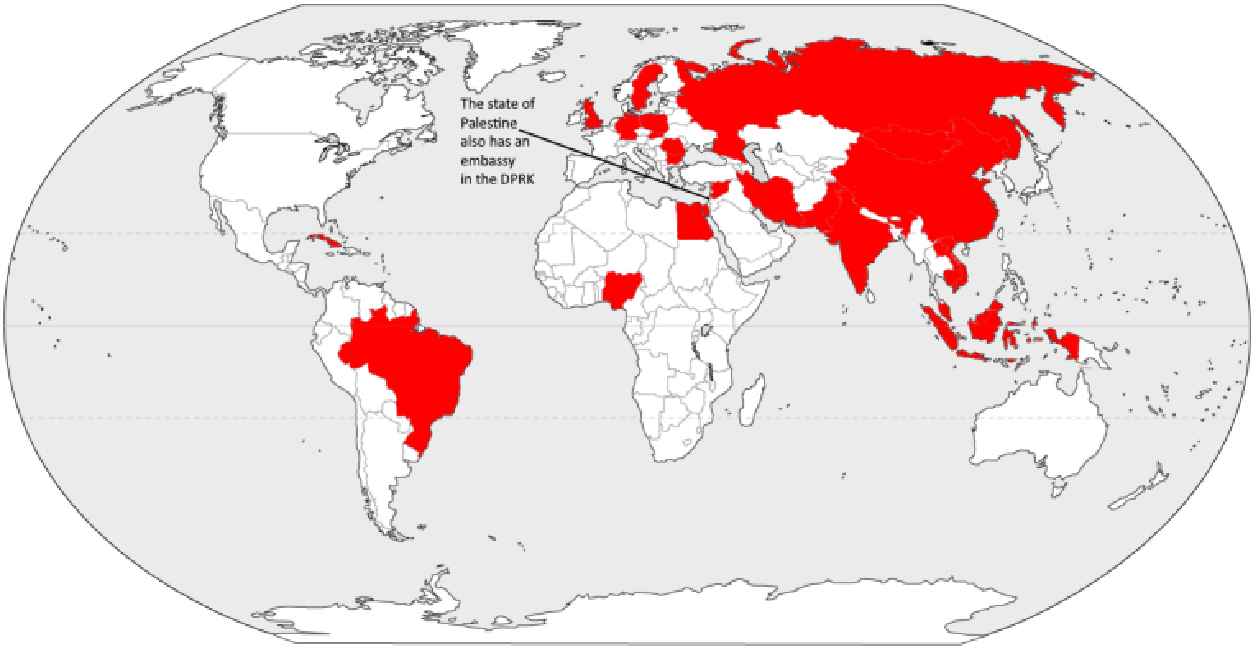
Third World countries. This placed a significant burden on North Korea's economy. A former member of the North Korean elite, Kang Myong-do stated "that excessive aid to Third World countries had caused an actual worsening of North Korea's already serious economic problems" in the 1980s (Bradley K. Martin, Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004), 137).

To a certain degree, the North Korean branding of their nation as a Third World model appears to have worked. Numerous Asian, African, and Latin American nations established close relations with the North and found its flexible use of Marxism-Leninism and the Juche ideology enticing. In particular, the Cuban leadership formed a close relationship with North Korea based on Third World internationalism and a commitment to supporting anti-colonial guerilla struggles around the world. Che Guevara, a leading proponent of Third Worldism, visited North Korea and met with Kim Il Sung twice in the early 1960s (Charles K. Armstrong, "Juche and North Korea's Global Aspirations," North Korea International Documentation Project Working Paper No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, April 2009), 33Charles K. Armstrong, "Juche and North Korea's Global Aspirations," North Korea International Documentation Project Working Paper No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, April 2009), 33). In the fall of 1960, Guevara visited the DPRK both to see an example of "Asian socialism" and sell Cuban sugar to his Korean comrades (Jon Lee Anderson, Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life (New York: Grove Press, 1997), 467). On January 6, 1961, Guevara appeared on Cuban state television and discussed his trip. He praised North Korea for its achievements in heavy industry (Anderson, Che Guevara, 473). Just weeks before the Bay of Pigs invasion on April 17, 1961, Guevara spoke with the independent journalist I.F. Stone. Stone commented, "Che spoke with enthusiasm of what he had seen in his grand tour of the Soviet bloc. What impressed him most was the reconstruction of North Korea and the quality of its industrial output, here was a tiny country resurrected from the ashes of American bombardment and invasion" (I.F. Stone, "The Legacy of Che Guevara," Ramparts (December 1967), 21). Eighteen years later, Eldridge Cleaver's comments on North Korea's rapid postwar reconstruction would echo what Guevara had said. Cuban leader Fidel Castro was also enthusiastic about North Korean socialism and called Kim Il Sung "one of the most eminent, outstanding, heroic leaders of socialism." According to a Russian archival document, Raul Castro, Fidel's brother and second secretary of the Cuban Politburo, visited the DPRK in 1966 and emphasized the close friendship of the Cuban Communist Party and Korean Workers' Party at a mass rally in Pyongyang. Raul Castro announced to the North Korean crowd, "If anyone wants to find out the opinion of Comrade Fidel Castro about the fundamental issues of modern times then he can ask Comrade Kim Il Sung about this" ("From a June 2, 1967 Memo of the Soviet Embassy in the DPRK (1st Secretary V. Nemchinov) About Some New Factors in Korean-Cuban Relations," (June 2, 1967) NKIDP digital archive (accessed March 9, 2015)). North Korea's Third World diplomacy was most noticeable in Africa. Kim Il Sung hoped to sway many newly independent countries to support the North Korean cause of reunification and its position in the United Nations (See Benjamin R. Young, "The Struggle for Legitimacy: North Korea's Relations with Africa, 1965-1992," British Association for Korean Studies Papers no. 16 (forthcoming, 2015)). In October 1958, Guinea became the first sub-Saharan African nation to establish diplomatic ties with Pyongyang, and Algeria established diplomatic relations with the DPRK earlier that year (Armstrong, Tyranny of the Weak, 144). Other sub-Saharan African nations waited until the early 1970s to develop diplomatic relations with the DPRK, when it was possible to recognize both South Korea and North Korea (The Sub-Saharan African nations to which I refer are Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Uganda, Upper Volta, and Zaire. See Armstrong, Tyranny of the Weak, 179). In the 1960s and 1970s, many African government officials and leaders who visited the DPRK praised North Korea's postcolonial and postwar reconstruction and sought to model their nations on Kim Il Sung's brand of socialism. An Ethiopian diplomat who visited North Korea in 1976 remarked, "The political independence and economic self-reliance, which is resolutely defended by the Korean people, is an excellent model for the socialist Ethiopian people" ("Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Report: Visit of an Ethiopian Government Delegation in the DPRK," (April 28, 1976) NKIDP digital archive (accessed May 10, 2013)). Other delegations from Africa also hoped to learn from North Korea's socialist development. A Mozambican delegation visited North Korea in 1978 "to take note of the Korean experience regarding the methods and paths used by the DPRK to build the socialist society" ("Telegram 066.712 From the Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs," (June 3, 1978), NKIDP digital archive (accessed March 9, 2015)). In addition, Malian head of state Moussa Traore "called the achievements and experiences of the DPRK a model for the developing countries" ("Hungarian Embassy in the DPRK, Telegram, June 2 1976: Subject: Visit of the President of Mali in the DPRK," (June 2, 1976), NKIDP digital archive (accessed March 9, 2015)). In the 1960s and 1970s many Third World leaders, particularly Africans, looked to the DPK and sought a political system that was distinct from Western and Soviet styles of rule. North Korea, a small postcolonial Third World country, with its strong leadership, a disciplined populace, rapid postwar reconstruction, and an ideology centered on self-reliance was an alluring model to many African authorities. The North Korean leaders welcomed support from Third World peoples (which included the BPP) who denounced U.S. imperialism and proclaimed the DPRK the proper government of the "40 million Heroic Korean People." From North Korea's perspective, due to its competition with South Korea for votes in the United Nations and recognition as the true Korean state, the BPP was a useful ally. In the 1960s and 1970s the leaders of the DPRK and the BPP viewed themselves as vital members of a global project highlighting self-reliance and development. The North Korean leaders welcomed support from Third World peoples (which included the BPP) who denounced U.S. imperialism and proclaimed the DPRK the proper government of the "40 million Heroic Korean People." From North Korea's perspective, due to its competition with South Korea for votes in the United Nations and recognition as the true Korean state, the BPP was a useful ally. In the 1960s and 1970s the leaders of the DPRK and the BPP viewed themselves as vital members of a global project highlighting self-reliance and development.

In bourgeois media, sources abound that the DPRK is “isolated” from the rest of the world and is thus a “hermit kingdom.” International Business Times asks that “Why Is North Korea So Isolated?,” The Diplomat declares that the country has “growing isolation” and has “Self-Imposed Isolation” while HuffPost claims that sanctions are “isolating the isolated,” BBC claims to have an “exclusive” on the country’s “cultural isolation,” and Forbes declares the country has an “isolated regime.” This claim, trumpeted across the media in many more outlets than those just listed, is an utter lie just like the propaganda spread by Time magazine about the “origin” of the nuclear program of the DPRK in the ashes of the Soviet Union. A report released in 2017 by bourgeois “watchers” noted that even as the country’s “ideology of Juche has emphasized independence in foreign affairs,” this, in reality, hasn’t meant “diplomatic or economic isolation.” In fact, 163 “countries have established formal diplomatic relations with North Korea” even though many of these countries do not “have an ambassador accredited to the DPRK or a diplomatic mission in Pyongyang,” possibly because of the pressure of imperialists through sanctions or some other reason related to those specific countries. However, the DPRK has “embassies in 47 countries, with several of its ambassadors also accredited to neighboring countries” and has also established “a handful of trade missions or representative offices in countries where it lacks an embassy, as well as diplomatic missions to UN offices in New York, Geneva, and Paris.” That doesn’t sound like an isolated country at all! The 47 countries hosting embassies of the DPRK are shown in the map below, coming from the report:



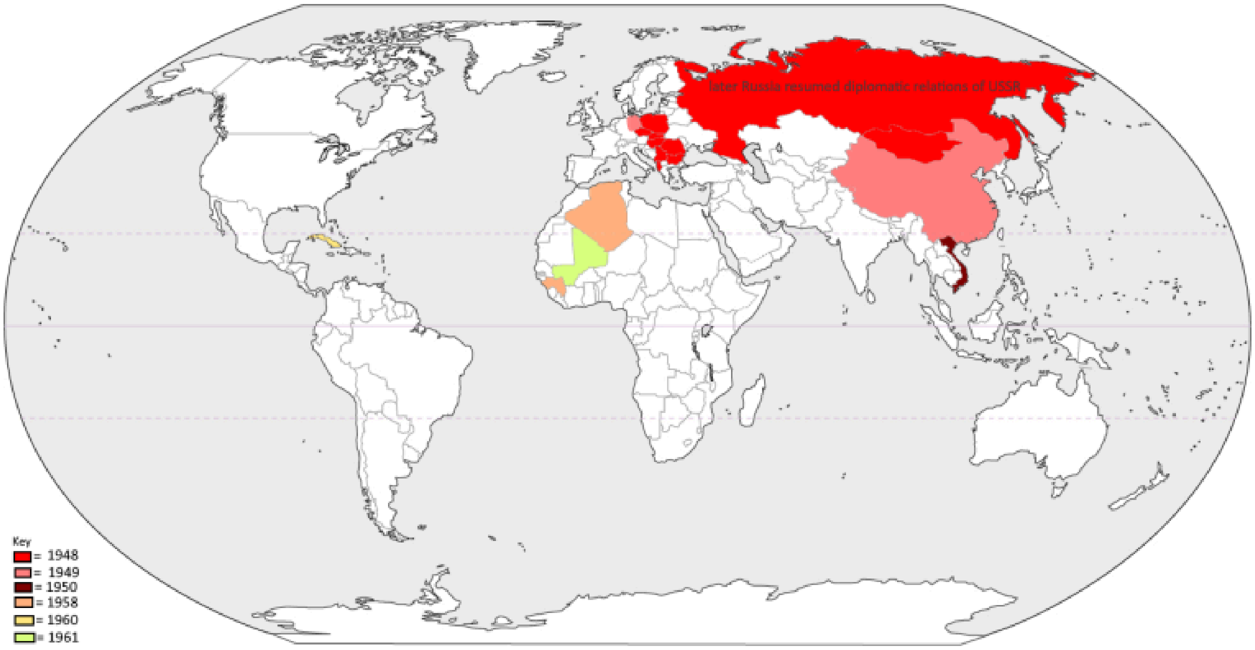
Then there are 24 countries which have embassies in Pyongyang are varied, and even include some of the countries in Western Europe, again showing this idea of “isolation” which is spread across the bourgeois media is silly:



That comes to a total of about 4.3 billion souls (at least) represented by the embassies (and their ambassadors) of the 24 countries, shown on the above map, within the DPRK! If we take the bourgeois media at its word, which we should never do for any sort of media, bourgeois or proletarian, it would seem that more than $100 million of goods was traded with the DPRK by African countries on an annual basis, along with military training in central Africa, shipping of arms, and pervasive ties to Africa (Salem Solomon, "Africa's Ties to North Korea Extend Beyond Isolated Military Deals," VOA, Sept 17, 2017; Kevin J. Kelley, "Uganda: UN Probes Tanzania and Uganda Deals With North Korea," TheEastAfrican, Sept 13, 2017). However, many of the countries quoted by the grey propaganda VOA outlet say that they have no trade or lessened relationships with the DPRK, underling the whole article! Apparently these accusations were taken seriously enough to warrant investigations by the United Nations, showing it to be, in this case, a tool of the imperialists to disrupt any claimed ties between the DPRK and the African continent which it forged "since most nations' struggle for independence in the 1960s." The same can be said about the list of 49 countries which purportedly violated sanctions of the UN Security Council, again working as a tool of the imperialists, claimed by a bourgeois think tank (the Institute for Science and International Security), with "violations" ranging from "banned financial transactions and other business activities," importing "goods and minerals," helping the DPRK ship "materials in and out of its country illicitly" and, finally, "arms trading or military training," the latter which are mostly in Africa (Zeeshan Aleem, "Here's why North Korea's economy is able to survive sanction after sanction," Vox, Dec 7, 2017). It is hard to know how much of this is even true, but it shows that imperialists are trying to criminalize the business of trade for the DPRK in order to "isolate" it. But, if even some of these "violations" are true, which is possible since the DPRK has sent arms to Pakistan, Myanmar, and the UAE in the past, it shows that part of the world is not going along with this, which is an act of resistance in and of itself.

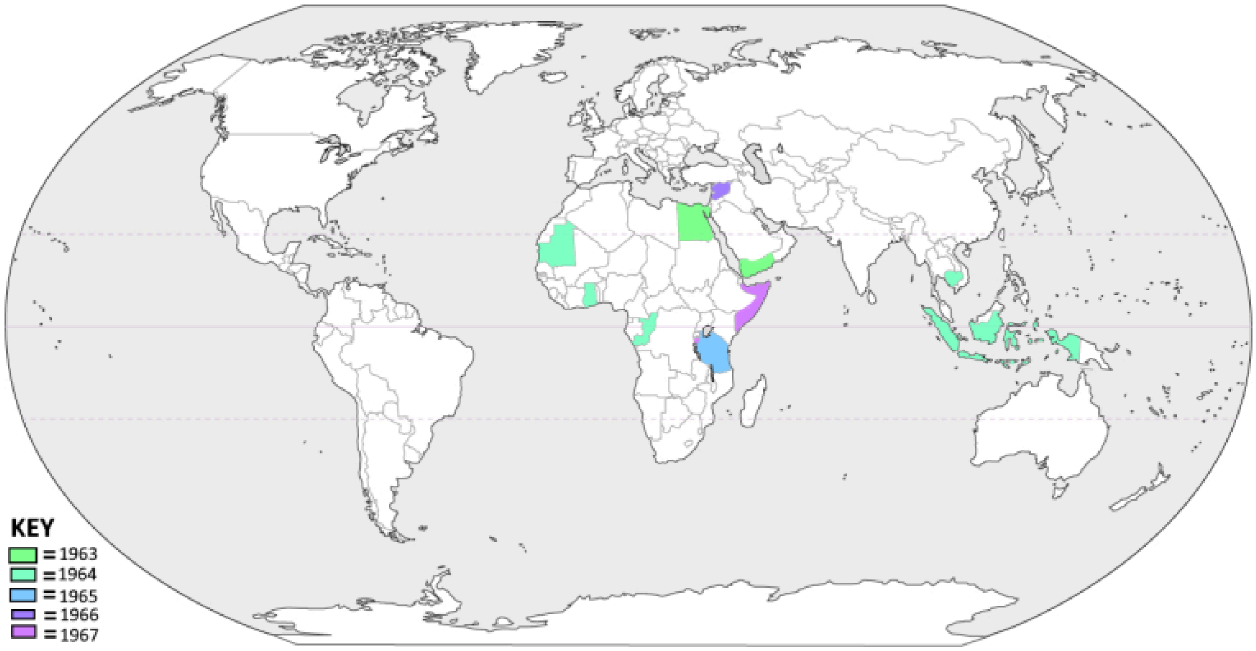
Perhaps some of the countries share the view of President Teodoro Obiang of Equatorial Guinea who congratulated "Kim Jong-un for his election victory at the recent Workers Party

Congress, and pledged increased support for North Korea's attempts to build a thriving socialist nation" (Samuel Ramani, "North Korea's African Allies," The Diplomat, Jun 4, 2016. Take for example Bolivia, officially called the Plurinational State of Bolivia and headed by Evo Morales, which has harshly criticized the murderous apartheid and Zionist state. While some sources seem to indicate there is an accredited DPRK embassy in Caracas, nothing can be found about the relations between Bolivia and Juche Korea, just information on the former's elections (see here, here, and here), the Communist Party of Bolivia, the Constitution of Bolivia, Morales's criticism of the orange menace, a page on the website of the US State Department, and a page on labor stats by the ILO). For the latter country, ties with the DPRK go back to the 1970s when a former president, Francisco Nguema, welcomed military advisers of the DPRK, and changed the "the name of his ruling party to the United National Workers Party in 1971" (Juche 60) reportedly to mirror the ruling party of the DPRK, the WPK (Workers' Party of Korea). It is known, beyond this, that Cambodia has a "curious friendship" with the DPRK as the latter has "few economic interests in Cambodia" but there is still seemingly a persistent "residual affinity" and growing relationship (Sebastian Strangio, "North Korea's New Friend?," *The Diplomat*, Aug 14, 2011; Go Cambodia, "North Korea seeks Cambodia's help," 2017; Jack Board, "The curious case of North Korea in Cambodia," *Channel NewsAsia*, Apr 23, 2017; Luke Hunt, "North Korea-Cambodia Relations: The Sound of Silence," *The Diplomat*, Mar 2017; Prak Thun Thul, "Jailing of Khmer Rouge leaders 'sends message to North Korea': U.N. envoy," *Reuters*, Nov 23, 2016; Elizabeth Shim, "North Korea intervenes in Cambodia, U.N. human rights dispute," *UPI*, Nov 10, 2016). This is the case while some goofballs think that jailing Khmer Rouge leaders sends a message to the DPRK even though the latter is not connected to the Khmer Rouge at all. At the present, Juche Korea also has friendly relations with Bulgaria, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, Thailand (dating back to the backing of a communist "insurgency" there during the Cold War), Mongolia (also see here), Myanmar (which resumed diplomatic ties in 2007 after canceling them in 1983 (Juche 72) after imperialists claimed the DPRK was tied to terrorism), The Gambia, and Hungary, to name a few. Any foreign policy errors they may have made undoubtedly has roots in their revisionist approach.



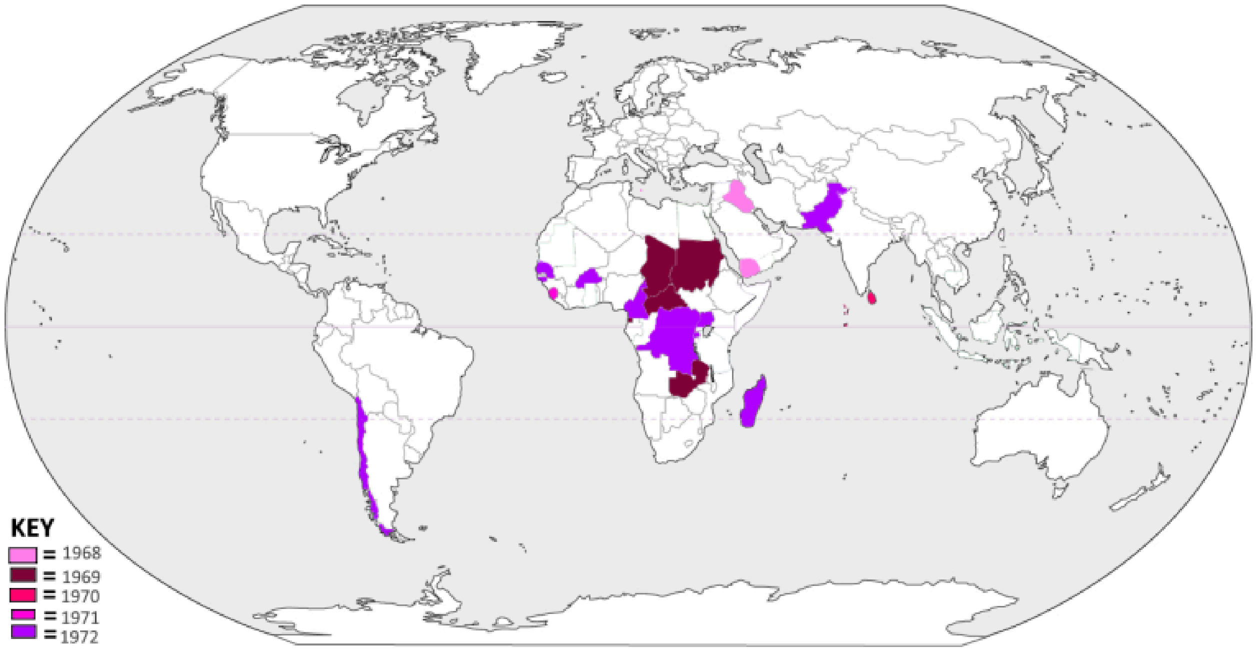
Diplomatic relations by the DPRK with other nations, 1948-1961. Later Serbia resumed the diplomatic relations of Yugoslavia. Relations with Democratic Republic of Vietnam began in 1950. In later years, in 1982, the president of Guinea named an institute inaugurated in the country the "Kim Il Sung Agricultural Science Institute" showing the power of their support for African liberation.

Such internationalism is nothing new for the DPRK and is rooted in its early years when it received aid and support from socialist nations. For example, medical staff from the Hungarian People's Republic, part of the Warsaw Pact, in 1952 (Juche 41) during the Great Fatherland Liberation War, workers helping reconstruct the country after the destruction of the war, and construction of a surgical hospital in 1955 (Juche 44). The same was the case with aid from the German Democratic Republic (GDR), called "East Germany" in the West, which exported "machines, pharmaceuticals, medical instruments and other medical equipment" in 1952, and created a group of 600 workers, a "Bau-Union," for "the purpose of construction and repair of roads and bridges in North Korea" in 1955. Additionally, Czechoslovakian and Soviet troops were reportedly stationed in the DPRK in 1951 (Juche 38), Polish motor vehicles from the Zeran plant in Poland were delivered to the country in 1954 (Juche 43), and Polish engineers went to the DPRK in 1955, agreeing to "serve as building instructors" for a period of three years. Then there is aid from the Soviet Union which supplied "machine guns, rifles, mortars, other small arms...obsolete artillery...trucks...[and] Soviet tanks" in 1954, a military pact with the DPRK in 1950, Soviet college professors sent to the country in 1950 (Juche 39), and military cooperation in later years, even in the later 1980s, different from the Russia of today.The efforts against the US$ imperialists under the UN flag during the Great Fatherland Liberation War were bolstered by thousands of pairs of tennis shoes from Communist China, hundreds of thousands of blankets from Hungary, 300,000 sheets from Czechoslovakia, two medical aircraft from Poland, two boxcars of medicine from GDR, and 10,000 horses from Mongolia just in 1951! By 1958 (Juche 47), even General Nathan F. Twining, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, part of the US military establishment, had to admit that "the Communist position in North Korea is stronger than ever because they have a better base from whence to operate."



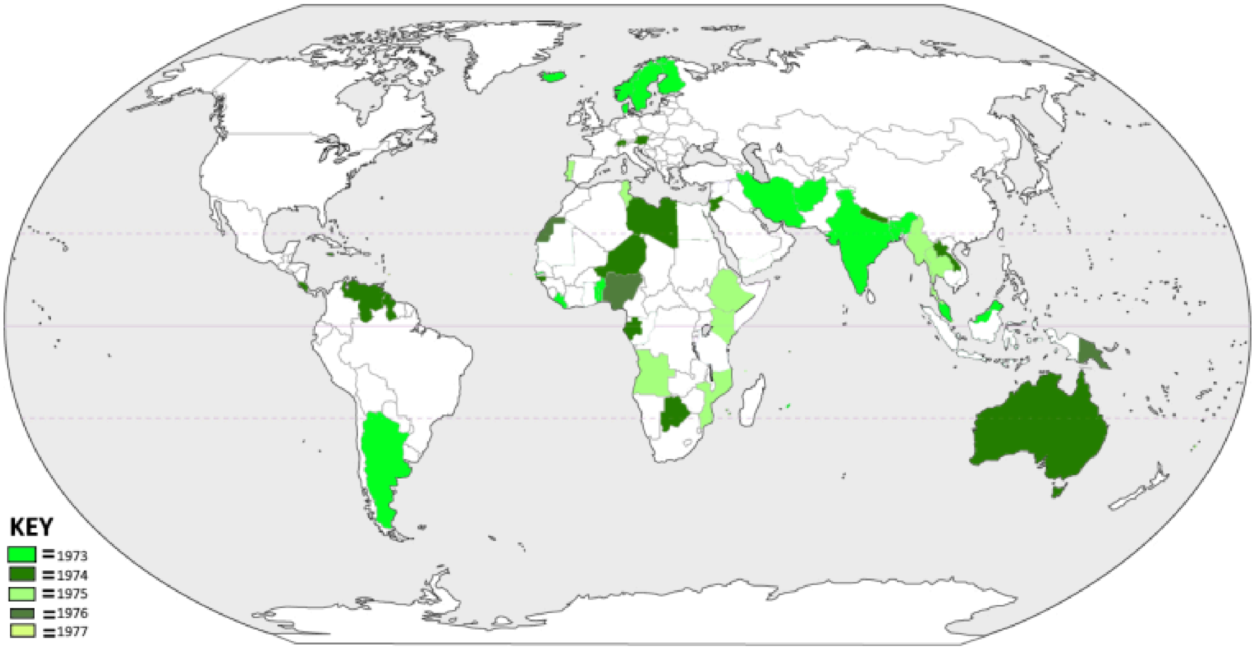
Diplomatic relations established by Juche Korea, 1963-1967. In 1966 relations with the state of Palestine began, while Mauritania suspended relations from 1977-1980.

By 1966 (Juche 55), the DPRK was trading $445 million in traded goods, raising from previous years (it was only $124 million in 1949) with more exports than imports, and most of the trade with "communist" nations. This was thanks to their independent policy, establishing relations with all sorts of countries across the world. For instance in 1964, the government criticized the actions by imperialists in Vietnam, expressed the hope of "traditional solidarity" with the Soviets, established diplomatic relations with Mauritania, indirectly said the country should not "conform to Chinese dogma" and established diplomatic relations with Congo! In the 1950s, as the Soviets made moves against trusteeship on the Korean Peninsula, supported by imperialists, the DPRK proposed holding "elections in all Korea" while the puppet ROK state wanted elections in each artificial division of the Korean Peninsula, an imperialist-backed viewpoint, as they wanted a "non–Communist, independent and representative government" in Korea. However, by 1972 (Juche 61), the Chinese were openly supporting peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula, with the cause for reunification again pushed by the DPRK the same year. Since then the Chinese have changed their position to supporting reunification but only because it will benefit their capitalist class.



Diplomatic relations established by the DPRK, 1968-1972. Relations with Iraq broken off in Oct 1980. Relations with South Yemen in 1968. Relations with Sri Lanka suspended 1971-1975, later a ship with "more than 100 tractors, pumps, plows, vinyl pipes of more than 50 thousand meters and other agricultural implements" were sent to the country, as noted by a Spanish-speaking comrade named Fekerfanta, aid which was requested by Si Lanka. Relations with Chile broken in Sept 1973, later resumed in 1990 after Pinochet.

By the 1970s, there was concern among imperialists and the puppet Koreans in the south that the DPRK may get an upper hand. One diplomatic cable in 1974 remarked that "there are several states in Asia and perhaps half a dozen in Western Europe that would be stimulated to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea." The same year, Park, the puppet president of ROK, declared that "the North Koreans are the most militant, radical Communists of all Communist Party nations in the world" and was concerned that "the general trend in Japan is towards the left. The left-wing press and political circles are pressuring the Japanese Government, and the Japanese Government is making hasty approaches to North Korea. I hope the U.S. will use its influence to discourage these approaches." Basically, the ROK and imperialists were worried because they felt that this would weaken efforts to "contain" the DPRK! As a cable in 1975 (Juche 64) remarked, "what happens in Korea affects the balance of power elsewhere and vice versa. Europe is affected by the expansion of Soviet power in Korea."



Diplomatic relations established by the DPRK, 1973-1977. Relations with Argentina broken in 1977. Relations with Australia suspended 1975-2000. Relations with Fiji suspended from 1987-2002. Costa Rica relations broken off at year not known. Myanmar relations suspended 1983-2007. On Feb 2 of this year, Jordan terminated its diplomatic relations with the DPRK, which it claimed it was doing "in line with the policies of Jordan's allies" with its major ally being the murderous empire!

Fast forward to June 1985 (Juche 74). A Special National Intelligence Assessment was issued saying that the DPRK had an "activist foreign policy" aiming to unify Korean peninsula, deny recognition to ROK, gain continuing support of revisionist USSR and revisionist China, and engage in overtures to Seoul and West in hopes of improving the image of the DPRK, solicit "new trade and aid," even investment. The report estimated that there were 700 military personnel on the African continent, along with military assistance and other aid. Advisers from Juche Korea were in countries were Soviets were supposedly present, and their policy sprung from what had been done in the late 1960s and early 1970s,when liberation fighters, which they called "terrorist groups and extremists" were supported "in Africa, Middle East, and Africa." The following year, another report was issued by the intelligence community of the murderous empire. It argued that the DPRK continued to push for reunification, looking to the periphery, which they called the "Third World," for support, opposed the legitimacy of ROK, and turned toward Moscow, benefiting from Soviet aid. It also added that while the Soviets disliked the government (showing it was not a Soviet colony), the DPRK disliked the "regime in Afghanistan," was said to have supported "Prince Sihanouk's anti-Vietnamese struggle in Cambodia" while the government distanced itself "from Moscow elsewhere in the Third World" in order to be and stay non-aligned in the world. Some of these stances were emblematic of their revisionist approach at the time.

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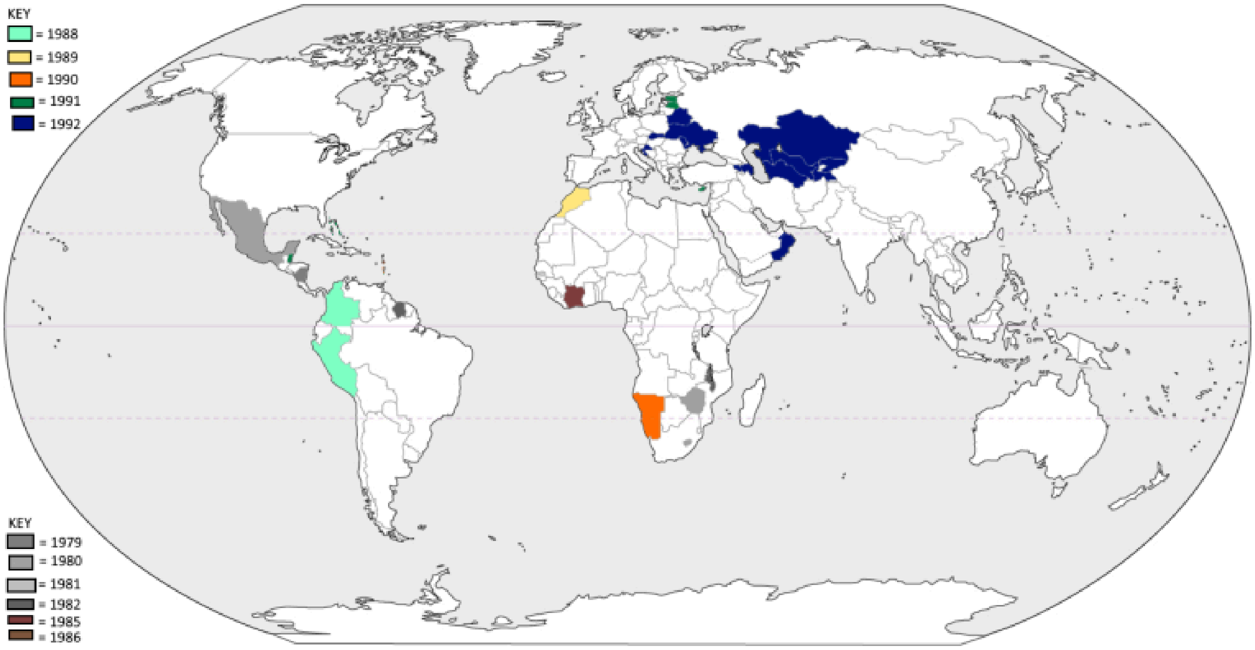
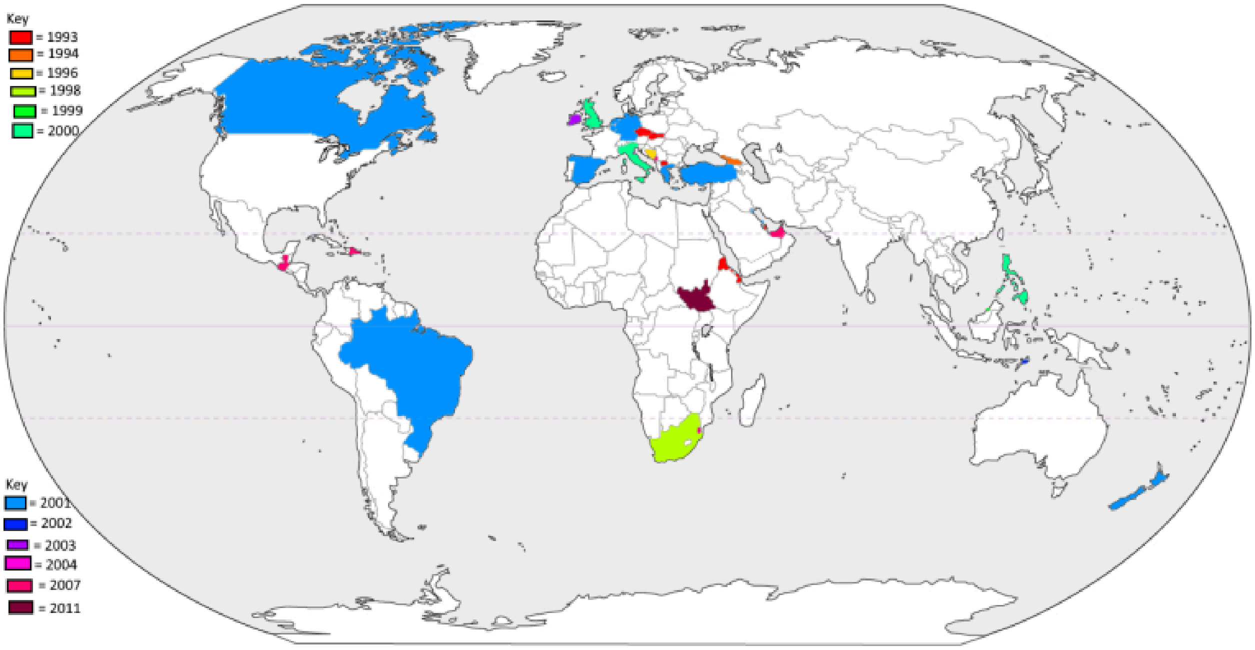


Diplomatic relations established by Juche Korea 1979-1992. Grenada relations broken Jan 1985, later resumed. Lesotho relations broken Aug 1986, later resumed.

In the later years of the Cold War, the Soviets recognized the ROK, and the Chinese did in 1992 (Juche 81), which was a "major diplomatic blow to North Korea." After the Cold War ended, international politics shifted, leading "Pyongyang to drop its longstanding opposition to joining the UN jointly with Seoul, with both north and south Korea joining the global body in 1991" along with the "collapse of the Soviet bloc" resulting in cuts in aid to the DPRK, leading to economic problems in the mid-1990s and closing "many of its embassies between 1993 and 2001" since the budget was restricted (Daniel Wertz, JJ Oh, and Kim Insung, "DPRK Diplomatic

Relations," issue brief, *National Committee on North Korea (NCNK)*, August 2016. A version of this is also on a webpage currently on their website, but also archived here. NCNK is a NGO, which is part of Mercy Corps (a 501 (c) charity) of those with "significant expertise in and diverse perspectives on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" which aims at "fostering mutual understanding and trust between the governments and peoples of the U.S. and DPRK, facilitating engagement and cooperation, reducing tension, and promoting peace on the Korean Peninsula through education, information-sharing, and relationship-building." While it is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ploughshares Fund, Henry Luce Foundation, and Pacific Century Institute, Inc, it claims that "donations from individuals are also an integral part of NCNK's financial base."As such, it is a bourgeois group (this is evident from looking at its members) but something can be taken from it of course. Its a bit like *38 North).* As a result the DPRK, in the early 2000s, established diplomatic relations with many European countries, even with with the European Union in 2001 (Juche 90), the culmination of their revisionist foreign policy but also due to the end of the Soviet Union. As the World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 2017, of U$ State Department showed, arms exports of DPRK were minimal from 2005-2015, but even they reportedly compromised much of the exports in 2005 and 2010 especially, there has been a decline in arms exports from 2005-2015 while abuses of human life continued within the murderous empire.



Diplomatic relations established by the DPRK, 1993-2011. Relations with Botswana broken in Feb 2014 [7]. 2001 relations with the EU began. In October of 2017, the UAE downgraded relations with Juche Korea (and stopped issuing visas to nationals from the DPRK), with "similar moves by Qatar and Kuwait" showing these Gulf autocracies really serve the murderous empire.

In the end, this article proves without a doubt that the DPRK is not isolated in its approach to the world, even though it has adopted revisionist approaches and there is the continuing trend of creeping capitalism in the country itself.

Juche in the United States: The Black Panther Party’s Relations with the DPRK, 1969-1971

While the Cold War is commonly defined as an ideological war between the forces of capitalism and communism, frequently ignored within this Manichean view of the conflict are agents from the Third World. As historian Vijay Prashad asserts, the Third World was not a place but a project that called for economic development, nonalignment, and an end to colonialism (Prashad, The Darker Nations, xv-xvii). In the late 1960s, political radicalism inside the United States had a distinctive Third World dimension. Anti-colonial revolutions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America captivated U.S. radicals while the American role in the Vietnam War enraged them. The iconic image of the Argentine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary Che Guevara adorned the shirts of young radicals while the chant, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, Viet Cong is going to win," could be heard across many college campuses. The late 1960s to early 1970s represented the peak of Third World solidarity inside the United States and some radicals looked to Asia, Africa, and Latin America as an alternative to U.S. and Soviet world dominance. The Black Panther Party was an important player in the ranks of this newly formed Third World-oriented American left and depicted the struggle for black self-determination as part of this global project. BPP member Kathleen Cleaver explains, "From its inception, the BPP saw the conditions of blacks within an international context, for it was the same racist imperialism that people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America were fighting against that was victimizing blacks in the United States" (Kathleen Cleaver, "Back to Africa: The Evolution of the International Section of the Black Panther Party (1969-1972) in The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered), ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998), 216). The Panthers considered urban Black America a part of the Third World as many of these communities struggled for the same basic freedoms and resources as people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (See Eldridge Cleaver, Eldridge Cleaver: Post-Prison Writings and Speeches (New York: Random House, 1969), 140). The Panthers also looked to prominent Third World figures such as Frantz Fanon, Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, and North Korean leader Kim Il Sung for revolutionary guidance. In 1969, the BPP established its international sector and reached out to many Third World nations for support. In particular, the BPP identified revolutionary Asia as a powerful antithesis to the racist and capitalist West.

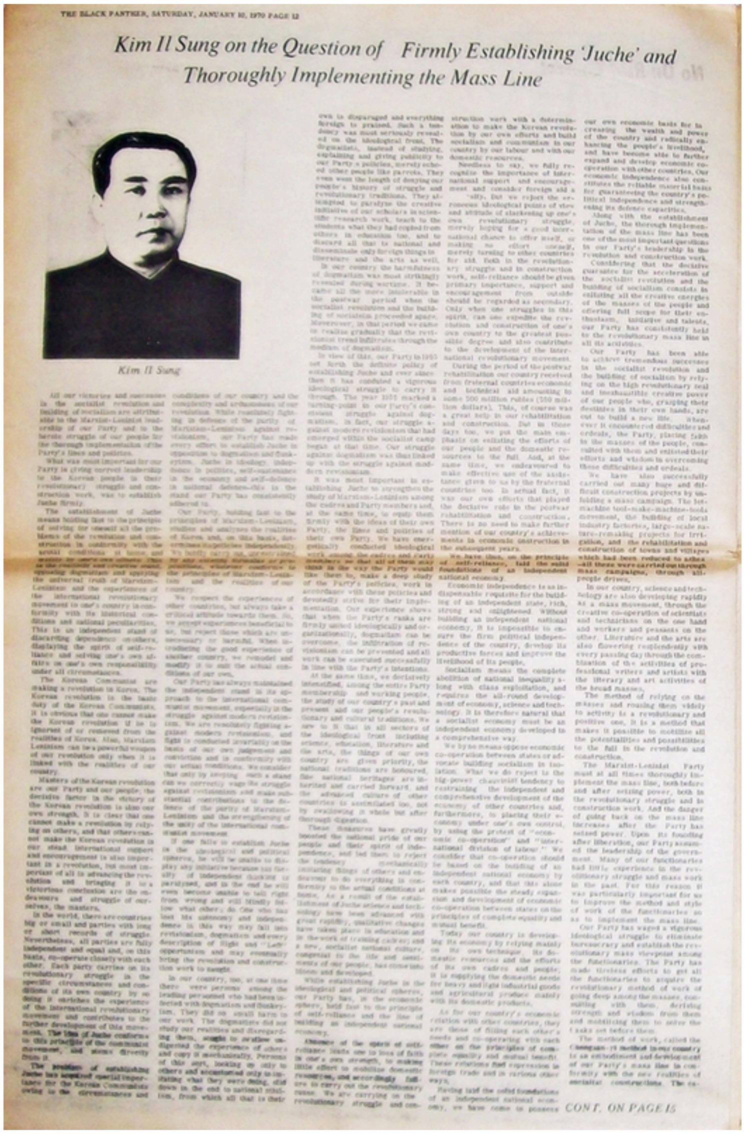
During the Vietnam War era, many American radicals deemed the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong the primary force of resistance to U.S. imperialism. They were the anti-colonial freedom fighters with which they identified (See Mary Hershberger, Traveling to Vietnam: American Peace Activists and the War (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998)). Cuba, with its geographic proximity to the U.S and reputation as a fierce critic of the U.S. and a revolutionary bastion in the Western hemisphere, also attracted many American radicals. Above all, the People's Republic of China and Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution captivated American radicals in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As a nation that offered an alternative brand of revolution, China's radical take on Marxist-Leninist theory and solidarity with the black freedom struggle reverberated in the American radical community. Mao's writings, including The Little Red Book, became the preferred revolutionary doctrine for many radicals (see Robin D.G. Kelley and Betsy Esch, "Black Like Mao" in Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans, eds. Fred Ho and Bill Mullen (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008); and Max Elbaum, Revolution in the

Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che (London: Verso, 2002)). In contrast to Vietnam, China, and Cuba, North Korea received relatively little attention in U.S. radical circles in the late 1960s. The Panthers uniquely forged a close alliance with North Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The BPP's Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver "discovered" Kim Il Sung and North Korean communism after a 1969 trip to Pyongyang for an anti-imperialist journalist conference (see Brandon Gauthier, "The American-Korean Friendship and Information Center and North Korean Public Diplomacy, 1971-1976," Yonsei Journal of International Studies vol. 6, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2014), 151-162). Cleaver claimed that the "Motherland of Marxism-Leninism in our era" was the DPRK (see Eldridge Cleaver's Typed Notes on Korea," September 28 1969, Texas A&M University, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, The Eldridge Cleaver Collection, 1959-1981). Although the Panthers were not the only American radical leftists who forged ties with the DPRK, they established the strongest connection. Other American radical leftist organizations whose members traveled to North Korea during the 1960s and 1970s include the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA), the Youth International Party (Yippies), the Movement for a Democratic Military, the Peace & Freedom Party, the women's liberation movement, the San Francisco-based Red Guards, the radical magazine Ramparts, and the film collective, New York NEWSREEL. Prominent radical leftist organizations such as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Weather Underground neither sent members to North Korea nor showed any interest in establishing relations with the North Korean government.

Eldridge Cleaver was particularly drawn to the North Korean leadership's adaptation of Marxism-Leninism in the form of the Juche ideology (generally defined as self-reliance), the country's economic success in the 1960s, and its opposition to U.S. imperialism around the world, a position honed in the Korean War (see Charles Armstrong, "The Role and Influence of Ideology," in North Korea in Transition: Politics, Economy, and Society, eds. Kyung-Ae Park and Scott Snyder (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2013); Rudiger Frank, "Socialist Neoconservatism and North Korean Foreign Policy" in New Challenges of North Korean Foreign Policy, ed. Kyung-Ae Park (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); B.R. Myers, The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Publishing, 2010); and Jae-Jung Suh, ed., Origins of North Korea's Juche: Colonialism, War, and Development (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2013)). Although Huey Newton was arguably the most important leader of the BPP, Black Power scholar Peniel Joseph argues that the Panthers "would reflect Cleaver's vision as much as, if not more than Newton's" (Peniel Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2006), 178). After his return from North Korea, Cleaver spread the news of his "discovery" within the BPP chapter in Oakland, California and its international section, based in Algiers, Algeria. Cleaver was the editor of the BPP's official organ, The Black Panther, which featured numerous articles on "the People's Korea" and Kim Il Sung after his 1969 trip (See Eldridge Cleaver, Soul on Ice (New York: Random House, Inc., 1968)). With Cleaver as the driving force of this alliance, the BPP depicted the DPRK as a Third World model of modernity and autonomy as well as a "socialist paradise" that America could one day aspire to become after revolution (see Joseph Bermudez, Terrorism: The North Korean Connection (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1990)). Eldridge Cleaver would often use the Chinese proverb – "the enemy of your enemy is your friend" – to describe the BPP's alliance with the North Korean leadership and their mutual criticisms of

U.S. imperialism. Cleaver and the Panthers who supported his vision were not pawns of the North Korean regime but calculating revolutionaries who viewed the alliance with North Korea as a means to protest against the U.S. government and strengthen their own position both within the BPP and on the international scene. By 1971, the Panthers were effectively split into two different camps. The Huey Newton-led camp emphasized local changes and social welfare programs, such as the free breakfast for children program, in American inner cities. Cleaver's faction focused on ties with socialist-oriented Third World nations and advocated guerilla warfare on the streets of white America, or as Cleaver called it "Babylon," in order to defeat the white bourgeois power structure (See Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 218-239; and Sean Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon: Eldridge Cleaver's Cold War," Diplomatic History 37, no. 3 (2013): 538-571). Throughout the Cold War, American leaders presented themselves as agents of freedom and democracy abroad. However, the BPP and other black radicals attacked the U.S. government for violating the basic human rights of African Americans. Thus, North Korea's connection to the BPP, an organization fighting racial discrimination within the United States, exposed the hypocrisy of American democracy and challenged the notion of the United States as the leader of the "Free World."

Cleaver and the Panthers who supported his vision were not pawns of the North Korean regime but calculating revolutionaries who viewed the alliance with North Korea as a means to protest against the U.S. government and strengthen their own position both within the BPP and on the international scene (See Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 218-239; and Sean Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon: Eldridge Cleaver's Cold War," Diplomatic History 37, no. 3 (2013): 538-571). Throughout the Cold War, American leaders presented themselves as agents of freedom and democracy abroad. However, the BPP and other black radicals attacked the U.S. government for violating the basic human rights of African Americans. Thus, North Korea's connection to the BPP, an organization fighting racial discrimination within the United States, exposed the hypocrisy of American democracy and challenged the notion of the United States as the leader of the "Free World." The BPP-North Korean relationship that Cleaver forged was predicated on strategic self-interest and a common ideological commitment to autonomy, self-reliance, and adjusting Marxism-Leninism to one's own conditions (See Martin Seliger, Ideology and Politics (London: Allen and Unwin, 1976). By illegally traveling to North Korea and forming an alliance with its leadership, the Panthers laid claim to being revolutionary diplomats who represented the "black colony" of the United States and directly challenged the U.S. state's authority by usurping its exclusive right to conduct foreign affairs (see Nihil Pal Singh, "The Black Panthers and the 'Undeveloped Country' of the Left," in The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998), 57-108). As historian Nikhil Pal Singh argues, the BPP mimicked the policies of state power (such as policing and setting up welfare programs in poor urban black communities, and pursuing diplomatic relations with foreign governments) as a way to challenge the state's presumed exclusive control of these activities and "the state's own reality principle" (Singh, "The Black Panthers and the 'Undeveloped Country' of the Left," 88). While the U.S. government has never diplomatically recognized the DPRK, the Panthers regarded and openly spoke of Pyongyang as the legitimate Korean government and South Korea as a "Yankee Colony."



THE BLACK PANTHER, SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 1970 PAGE 12

Kim Il Sung on the Question of Firmly Establishing 'Juche' and Thoroughly Implementing the Mass Line

Kim Il Sung

CONT. ON PAGE 15

The image above is the first comprehensive account of the alliance formed between the BPP and North Korea and contributes to recent scholarship on the Third World dimensions of the BPP and the international approach of the organization (see Charles K. Armstrong, Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the Modern World (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 177; Curtis Austin, "The Black Panthers and the Vietnam War," in America and the Vietnam War: Re-Examining the Culture and History of a Generation, ed. Andrew Wiest, Mary Kathryn Barbier, and Glenn Robins (New York: Routledge, 2010); Floyd W. Hayes, III, and Francis A. Kiene, III, "'All Power to the People': The Political Thought of Huey P. Newton and the Black Panther Party," in The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 157-176; G. Louis Heath, Off The Pigs: The History and Literature of the Black Panther Party, (Matuchen, New Jersey: The

Scarecrow Press, 1976); Sean Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon: Eldridge Cleaver's Cold War," Diplomatic History 37, no. 3 (2013): 538-571; Frank J. Rafalko, MH/CHAOS: The CIA's Campaign Against the Radical New Left and the Black Panthers(Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011); and Jennifer B. Smith, An International History of the Black Panther Party (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.,1999)). Scholars of the Black Power movement, such as Yohuru Williams, Peniel Joseph, Nikhil Singh, Sean Malloy, Joshua Bloom and Waldo Martin, have done important work on the BPP's efforts to become an international organization that connected issues affecting black Americans with those affecting other non-white people around the world (see Yohuru Williams, "'They've lynched our savior, Lumumba in the old fashion Southern style': The Conscious Internationalism of American Black Nationalism," in Black Beyond Borders, ed. Nico Slate (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 147-167; Yohuru Williams, "American Exported Black Nationalism: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Black Panther Party, and the Worldwide Freedom Struggle, 1967-1972," Negro History Bulletin 60, no. 3 (July-September 1997), 13-20; Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour; Singh, "The Black Panthers and the 'Undeveloped Country' of the Left," 57-108; Sean Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon: Eldridge Cleaver's Cold War," Diplomatic History 37, no. 3 (2013): 538-571; Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013)). As Peniel Joseph illustrates in his book, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America, liberation struggles in the Third World captivated black radicals and obscured the national boundaries of the global struggle against white supremacy. Temporally, the war in Vietnam and anticolonial independence movements in Africa coincided with the civil rights era in America. As revolutionaries from the streets of Oakland to the jungles of Southeast Asia came face-to-face with American imperialism, the local, national, and international forces of anticolonialism and antiracism created a globalized discourse and critique of American power. Sean Malloy argues that Eldridge Cleaver was the main architect of this new discourse for the BPP, which "blended Third World symbols and rhetoric, a loosely Marxist economic analysis, and a distinctive verbal and visual style influenced by the urban argot of the 'brothers on the block" (Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon," 552).

As Yohuru Williams explains, the African American freedom struggle's identification with Third World liberation movements, particularly the war in Vietnam, forced American military officials to take the Black Power movement seriously, as they worried about growing militancy amongst black soldiers (Yohuru Williams, "'They've lynched our savior, Lumumba in the old fashion Southern style': The Conscious Internationalism of American Black Nationalism," in Black Beyond Borders, 165). The BPP's influence went beyond the inner cities of America as the organization inspired similar groups to emerge in Israel, New Zealand, and India (see Oz Frankel, "The Black Panthers of Israel and the Politics of the Radical Analogy," in Black Beyond Borders, 81-106; Robbie Shilliam, "The Polynesian Panthers and the Black Power Gang: Surviving Racism and Colonialism in Aotearoa New Zealand," in Black Beyond Borders, 107-126; Nico Slate, "The Dalit Panthers: Race, Caste, and Black Power in India," in Black Beyond Borders, 127- 143). The Panthers also looked across the globe for revolutionary literature and ideologies. BPP members read Mao's Little Red Book and sold copies of it on the Berkeley campus (Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour, 176). After Cleaver's enthusiasm for Maoism waned, he looked to the North Korean ideology of Juche and sought to apply it to the unique situation of African Americans in the United States. Peniel Joseph explains, "Influenced by what he viewed as the successful application of Marxist theory to indigenous movements in

China and Korea, Cleaver proposed adopting a vision of class struggle that intimately considered African American experiences and the long history of racial subordination that confounded conventional Marxist rhetoric and practice" (Joseph, Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour, 211). Yohuru Williams would claim that the BPP "stood at the forefront of the worldwide freedom struggle against imperialism" on the basis of their reinterpretation of criminal activities in the United States as revolutionary acts and the establishment of friendly relations with revolutionary governments in the Third World, such as China and North Korea (Williams, "American Exported Black Nationalism," Negro History Bulletin, 19). The Black Panther newspaper is one of the primary outlets to detail the BPP-North Korean relationship. From October 1969 to January 1971, fifty-seven out of sixty-nine issues of The Black Panther featured some aspect of the BPP's alliance with North Korea (See Ward Churchill, "'To Disrupt, Discredit, and Destroy': The FBI's Secret War against the Black Panther Party," in Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and Their Legacy, ed. Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas (New York: Routledge, 2001), 85-86). Kathleen Cleaver's memoir and Eldridge Cleaver's diaries, letters, and handwritten and typed notes from his two trips to North Korea in 1969 and 1970 make it possible to explore the BPP-North Korean relationship in much greater depth and contextualize the BPP-North Korean alliance (See Benjamin R. Young, "'Our Common Struggle against Our Common Enemy': North Korea and the American Radical Left," Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars-North Korea International Documentation Project (NKIDP) e-Dossier no. 14, February 11, 2013). To capture the North Korean perspective on this relationship, I primarily look to articles from The Pyongyang Times, since it contains an abundant amount of material on North Korea's support of Third World movements and the BPP in the late 1960s to early 1970s. I also utilize materials from the Woodrow Wilson Center's North Korea International Documentation Project (NKIDP), a digital archive that gathers newly declassified documents onNorth Korea from its former communist allies.

The BPP's international section, led by Cleaver, embarked on a global mission to find a revolutionary ideology, that the Panthers could adapt to "the black colony" inside the United States, and reliable allies for their struggle in the United States. In so doing, the BPP's international section directly challenged the U.S. state and the diplomatic powers that it possessed. The North Koreans treated the BPP representatives as foreign diplomats and this appealed to the Party's sense of itself as an international organization that represented the interests of urban Black America. Following Eldridge Cleaver's abortive efforts to build an alliance with Fidel Castro in 1968-69, Algiers became the most important site of the BPP's internationalist efforts, where they developed a relationship with North Korean officials.64 In her memoir, Kathleen Cleaver explains that Algiers had become a haven for revolutionaries who were forced underground (Kathleen Cleaver, Unpublished Memoir, 540). Algiers had also been the home of Frantz Fanon, the famous anti-colonialist revolutionary, whose work Wretched of the Earth was required reading for BPP members. Eldridge Cleaver admitted that beyond Fanon, he knew very little about Algeria before going there (Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon," 559). In Algiers, Eldridge Cleaver, his wife Kathleen, and some two dozen members of the BPP established a base for BPP internationalism where they met officials from a wide range of revolutionary movements and socialist nations (Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon," 559-560). The BPP's international platform had caught the attention of North Korean officials. As Kathleen Cleaver explains, "Back in Algiers, the North Korean representatives became the closest associates of the Black Panther Party, for they were anxious to have a vehicle for disseminating the ideology of Kim Il Sung within the United States" (Kathleen Cleaver, "Back to Africa," in The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 226). The Panthers reprinted many of Kim Il Sung's speeches in their newspaper and his books became required reading in their political education classes. The BPP from the fall of 1969 through the winter of 1971 identified the teachings of Kim Il Sung, not Mao's writings or The Little Red Book, as the revolutionary doctrine most applicable to the BPP's situation. In April 1970, the Panthers began selling a book composed of Kim Il Sung's revolutionary thoughts. The book was titled, Let Us Embody More Thoroughly the Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance, and Self-Defense in All Fields of State Activity. In July 1970, the Panthers began selling two other books composed of Kim Il Sung's revolutionary thoughts. One of the books was titled, Each of You Should Be Prepared to be a Match for One Hundred. The other book was a September 7, 1968 report from the anniversary celebration of the founding of the DPRK, titled, The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the banner of freedom and independence for our people and the powerful weapon of building socialism and communism. The BPP sold these three books until January 1971. Each of these books were published by The New World Liberation Front, a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist group based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Eldridge Cleaver explained, "After careful investigation on the international scene, it is our considered opinion that it is none other than Comrade Kim Il Sung who is brilliantly providing the most profound Marxist-Leninist analysis, strategy, and tactical method for the total destruction of imperialism and the liberation of the oppressed peoples in our time" (Eldridge Cleaver, "Manifesto from The Land of Blood & Fire," The Black Panther 4, no. 15 (March 15, 1970)). The DPRK leadership viewed the alliance with the BPP as a means to promote the works of Kim Il Sung in the United States, while the BPP gained a sense of international support for its revolutionary line.

Algiers served as a pseudo-foreign embassy of the BPP. The Panthers passed their publications to fellow revolutionaries and embassies of socialist-aligned nations. The Panthers were invited to festivals, embassy dinners, and conferences much like diplomatic officials from nations. For example, at the Pan-African Cultural Festival held in Algiers in July 1969, the Panthers met North Korea's ambassador to Algeria who invited Eldridge Cleaver and the BPP's Deputy Minister of Defense Byron Booth to Pyongyang for an anti-imperialist journalist conference. Cleaver and Booth agreed to come to the DPRK because they sensed "the Korean people were serious in supporting us because they wanted the Americans out" (Eldridge Cleaver, Soul on Fire (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1978), 147).The BPP-North Korean relationship revolved around the anti-imperialist journalist conferences of 1969 and 1970. On September 11, 1969, Eldridge Cleaver and Byron Booth traveled to Pyongyang for the eight-day "International Conference on Tasks of Journalism of the Whole World in their Fight against U.S. Imperialist Aggression" (see ee Committee on Internal Security, House of Representatives, Gun-Barrel Politics: The Black Panther Party, 1966-1971 (Washington, D.C.: Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 105). The two Panthers were to represent "the progressive journalists of the United States of America." The presence of two radical African Americans representing the United States surely drew the attention of the conference (see G. Louis Heath, Off the Pigs: The History and Literature of the Black Panther Party, (Matuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1976), 163). Although the North Korean ambassador to China courted Huey Newton, Eldridge Cleaver was the BPP leader who was most disposed to the North Korean relationship (see Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 325). Cleaver was enamored with North Korea's blending of nationalism, communism, and self-reliance into the Juche ideology, which captivated him during his 1969 trip to the DPRK. Cleaver explained that the BPP were Marxist-Leninists who adapted scientific socialism to their situation (Eldridge Cleaver, "On the Ideology of the Black Panther Party," vol. 1 A Black Panther Party Pamphlet (1969) (accessed August 15, 2013)). North Korea took the same approach with Marxism-Leninism, which reinforced Cleaver's idea that the Panthers should not adopt a foreign ideology indiscriminately. According to Cleaver, "Juche is carrying out the Korean Revolution. Juche for us means... to carry out our revolution" ("Eldridge Cleaver's Typed Notes on Korea," September 28 1969, Texas A&M University, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, The Eldridge Cleaver Collection, 1959-1981). Cleaver was so enthralled by the North Korean brand of communism that he and Li Yuk-Sa, who may have been a member of Chongryon (an organization of pro-DPRK ethnic Koreans living in Japan), published their own book of Kim Il Sung's speeches and writings in 1972. Cleaver claimed that the book "must be read and understood by the American people" and much of its contents focused on explaining the Juche ideology (Eldridge Cleaver foreword to JUCHE!: The Speeches and Writings of Kim Il Sung, Li Yuk-Sa ed. (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972), XII). However, the meaning of Juche and its role in shaping DPRK international policy, remains contentious.

In this section, searching for a deeper meaning of Juche is unnecessary, as the BPP was specifically attracted to the Juche ideology's focus on self-reliance and the North Korean leadership's adaptation of Marxism-Leninism to its unique situation as a divided post-colonial nation (see Bridgette Baldwin, "In the Shadow of the Gun," in In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives on a Revolutionary Movement, eds. Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006). A Black Panther article from February 1970 instructs that, "Broken wine bottles and hypodermic needles are very effective. Pork chop and chicken bones can even be utilized as weapons. This is 'Juche' relying on what you have, to sustain your resistance" ("We Must Rely on Ourselves," The Black Panther 4, no. 13 (February 28, 1970)). In other words, the Panthers defined Juche as follows: "Use what you got to get what you need" (Committee on Internal Security, Gun-Barrel Politics, 105). To the Panthers, Juche meant achieving a goal through one's own efforts. North Korea's Juche ideology allowed the BPP to criticize the CPUSA for being too devoted to the Soviet line of Marxism-Leninism (peaceful coexistence) and perceived the organization as being dominated by whites, despite the presence of African Americans in key leadership positions (see Cedric Robinson, Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) and Robin D.G. Kelley, Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990)). According to Eldridge Cleaver, the CPUSA challenged the BPP's "right to adopt Marxism-Leninism - we could only do it under their good offices. So this principle of Juche, bolstered our own self assurances." Thus, Cleaver argued that, "When a cat [referring to a revolutionary] begins to utilize Marxism-Leninism, if he's not careful he could be made to feel that he's stealing something or that he doesn't really have the right to do that, and this sort of takes away the dynamic approach that you need" ("Interview with Eldridge Cleaver," The Black Panther 4, no. 18 (April 4, 1970)). For the BPP, even if the Juche ideology lacked any real weight on its own, it had a purpose in creating space between the organization and its domestic rivals. Following Cleaver and Booth's trip to the DPRK in 1969, the North Korean state-run media took a keen interest in the BPP's activities in the United States, because they reinforced the North's portrayal of American Imperialism as a global evil. In a 1970 interview with a journalist from the United Arab Republic, Kim Il Sung expressed solidarity with the African American struggle for equal rights and said, "Imperialism is attacked not only from outside but also from within and is confronted with an acute crisis. The struggle of the Negroes against racial discrimination and for freedom and democratic rights and an anti-war movement of the masses of the peoples are going on extensively in the United States." As his remarks reveal, Kim Il Sung regarded African Americans and the anti-war movement in the United States as allies in the global fight against American imperialism (See Kim Il Sung, Answers to the Questions Raised by Foreign Journalists (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1970) 196). On January 26, 1970, an article in The Pyongyang Times explained that the "U.S. imperialist human butchers" and "their reptile propaganda organs" were "hatching an unpardonable criminal plot to murder Bobby Seale, by making a new 'charge' against him." The "charge," to which the North Korean press referred, was the May 21, 1969 murder of Alex Rackley, a member of the BPP's New York Chapter, who had been suspected of being a police informant. After months of trials and deliberation, the jury was unable to reach a verdict on Seale's involvement in Rackley's murder and he was released from prison in 1972 (see "Suppression of USA Black Panther Party Must Be Stopped at Once," The Pyongyang Times, Paul Bass, "Black Panther Torture 'Trial' Tape Surfaces," New Haven Independent (February 21, 2013) (accessed September 4, 2013); and Neil MacFarquhar, "Harold M. Mulvey, 86, Judge at Tense Black Panther Trials," New York Times (March 1, 2000), C30). According to North Korean propaganda, the U.S. government's suppression of the BPP represented the general plight of African Americans living in a supposedly free society. On July 6, 1970, North Korean propagandists explained that the imprisonment of "hundreds" of BPP members "represents a shameless fascist barbarity against the thirty million American Negroes and an unbearable, nefarious challenge to the progressive forces of the United States and the revolutionary people the world over" ("Savage Repression against the Black Panther Party of USA Must Be Stopped Immediately," The Pyongyang Times (July 6, 1970), 8). Later, on September 23, 1970, a North Korean international broadcast in English condemned police raids on local Panther chapters in the United States and declared that the "Korean people" will continue to support the BPP's struggle for equality (Committee on Internal Security, Gun-Barrel Politics, 105). Kim Il Sung even sent the BPP a telegram wishing them success in their "just struggle to abolish the cursed system of racial discrimination of the U.S. imperialists and win liberty and emancipation" (Committee on Internal Security, Gun-Barrel Politics, 105). By covering the repression of the Panthers, which the North Korean press called "the most militant vanguard for the class and racial emancipation of the Negroes," the North Korean state-run media was able to challenge the U.S. government's duplicitous commitment to equality and civil rights for its citizens.

By 1970, it was clear that the BPP had won North Korean support. In late April 1970, Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver, along with BPP Field Marshal Don Cox, who had recently arrived in Algiers, were invited to a formal dinner at the North Korean embassy. During the dinner, Eldridge discussed with the North Korean ambassador the details of the July 1970 anti-imperialist journalist conference. Eldridge Cleaver would be taking a delegation of U.S. radical leftists to the conference while his pregnant wife, Kathleen Cleaver, would stay in Pyongyang. The hosting of Kathleen Cleaver indicates a shift in the North Korean leadership's perception of the BPP. North Korean leaders regarded the BPP as a legitimate political body that represented the interests of African Americans and thus treated Kathleen Cleaver as a dignitary of an allied nation. On June 2, 1970, Kathleen and her son, Maceo, arrived in Pyongyang. Eldridge Cleaver would later join her when he arrived with the U.S. delegation for the 1970 anti-imperialist journalist conference (see Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Radicals on the Road:

Internationalism, Feminism, and Orientalism during the Vietnam Era (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013). The Korean Women's Democratic Union hosted Kathleen Cleaver and sent her to a countryside home on the outskirts of Pyongyang. The home was located at Lake Changsuwon, "where summer houses were maintained for special government guests" (Kathleen Cleaver, Unpublished Memoir, 570-572). By caring for Kathleen Cleaver, the North Korean leaders also sent a message to U.S. officials: the victims of U.S. imperialism care for each other and stand together in their common fight. This paralleled Eldridge Cleaver's philosophy in the late 1960s that those who directly resisted U.S. imperialism were the most valuable allies. In December 1970, Cleaver pronounced, "We find our most efficacious and useful alliances are with those people who are directly confronted with the aggression by the U.S. imperialist government" (Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon," 559).

During the anti-imperialist journalist conferences of 1969 and 1970, the Black Panthers and their fellow travelers, led by Eldridge Cleaver, visited farms and factories exemplifying the "workers' paradise," that supposedly characterized the DPRK. Despite feuding with Eldridge Cleaver during the trip, Elaine Brown appreciated what she "saw was the genuine development of socialism" in North Korea (see: Brown, A Taste of Power, 218-231)). In 1970, the delegation "discovered a clean, efficient, industrialized state whose population was highly disciplined" (Kathleen Cleaver, "Back to Africa," in The Black Panther Party Reconsidered, 232). After a month-long stay, they left North Korea in mid-August. Members of the delegation were impressed with what they had seen (See Ronald Radosh, Commies: A Journey Through the Old Left, the New Left, and the Leftover Left (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002), 108-109). Demonstrating a continued interest in exposing American racial violence, the North Korean leadership offered political asylum to inmates involved in the 1971 Attica prison riots. During negotiations between prisoners and the police, the BPP told the inmates that they could live freely in four countries: North Korea, North Vietnam, Algeria, or Congo-Brazzaville (Herman Badillo and Milton Haynes, A Bill of No Rights: Attica and the American Prison System (New York: Outerbridge and Lazard, 1972), 87). This reinforced North Korea's "national solipsism." If citizens of its most hated enemy were praising Kim Il Sung, it proved to the North Korean leadership that they were building a better type of socialism. Nonetheless, at least some of the Panthers who traveled to the DPRK resented "the subtle brainwashing and unsubtle racism" of their North Korean hosts (Cleaver, Soul on Fire, 122). Kim Il Sung's personality cult made the North Koreans seem like automatons. As Kathleen Cleaver describes, "The courageous leader of '40 million Korean people' was given credit for every achievement in the country, making every discussion with the Korean hosts seem to American delegates like preprogrammed statements" (Kathleen Cleaver, "Back to Africa," 232). So why did the Panthers champion the DPRK as a paradise? In doing so, they depicted the DPRK as the antithesis to America, which the Party sought to expose as a racist and imperialist nation that failed to provide for its people, carried out racial discrimination across the country and abroad, and engaged in imperialistic wars.

In the late 1960s, Oakland, California (the home of the BPP) and Pyongyang, North Korea appeared to be polar opposites. As BPP visitors to Pyongyang perceived it, poverty, crime, and gun violence plagued the streets of Oakland while free education, health care, and a stable economy and infrastructure characterized Pyongyang. The boulevards of Pyongyang were clean and appeared to be violence-free, while the streets of Oakland resembled a racially-charged war zone, a quality that had become commonplace in many American inner cities during this period. Consequently, the North Korean model, with the additional appeal that the nation confronted the American war machine, looked attractive to BPP leaders. After his 1969 trip to North Korea, Byron Booth wrote in The Black Panther that, "Being here in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is like catching glimpses of the future. It's seeing what unity and the correct revolutionary program can create for those intent upon putting an end to oppression and the exploitation of man by man" (Byron Booth, "Beyond the Demarcation Line," The Black Panther 3, no. 27 (October 25, 1969)). In extolling the virtues of the DPRK's socialist system, the Panthers were not just protesting the U.S. government's oppression of urban Black America; they were also envisioning what they hoped would occur in their own communities. The Panthers produced calculated images of North Korea and its socialist system. While integral to the examination of this relationship, the BPP's images of life in the DPRK did not convey the reality of life for the majority of North Koreans. While many BPP members depicted the DPRK as a socialist model, they were taken on strict government approved routes that maintained the appearance of a workers' paradise.

The Panthers emphasized education and they believed they found in the North Korean educational system with its emphasis on Juche and national pride, ideas that might be applied in urban Black America. The BPP held that through education, African Americans could finally cut off the chains from their white oppressors. In their ten-point program, the BPP stated, "We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in present-day society" (Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 123). The Panthers started literacy campaigns in inner cities in order to overcome the trend of illiterate high school graduates. North Korea's educational revolution allured the Panthers. North Korean leaders expounded that they were the first Asian country to have eliminated illiteracy (Martin, Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader, 58). When BPP member Elaine Brown visited North Korea in 1970, she reported that each child is provided with a free education "up through what we would call high school and even college education" (Interview of Elaine Brown, The Black Panther 5, no. 14 (October 3, 1970)). Eldridge Cleaver wrote that due to "the correct educational policy of Comrade Kim Il Sung," one hundred universities were created and more than four million students go to school every day until the "age of labor" ("Eldridge Cleaver Notebooks," 1970, University of California, Berkeley, The Bancroft Library, BANC MSS 91/213c, The Eldridge Cleaver Papers, 1963-1988, Carton 5, Folder 8). North Korea's educational system emphasized Korean pride, loyalty to the Kim family, and an anti-colonial worldview, aspects that most likely did not go unnoticed when Panther members visited North Korean schools. In extolling the North Korean educational system, the Panthers were not only protesting the dysfunctional educational policies in urban Black America but also imagining an alternative model of schooling that they hoped to adopt after completing the "incomplete" American revolution.

Many African Americans, who lived in inner cities in the late 1960s and 1970s, were stuck in a vicious cycle of poverty, family breakdown, and disease. Living in unhygienic, cramped conditions and eating an inadequate diet, poor African Americans were susceptible to illness. Those who became sick could not go to work. Many could not afford the medical care in the few health care facilities located in the black community. This deplorable situation inspired the BPP's creation of programs focused on treating the nutritional and medical needs of urban Black America. The Panthers established breakfast programs for schoolchildren and clinics for treating colds and diagnosing tuberculosis, diabetes, sickle cell anemia, and high blood pressure (Alondra Nelson, Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against

Medical Discrimination (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 106). The Panthers depicted health care as a universal right and stated in their ten-point platform that health care should be "completely free for all black and oppressed people" (Nelson, Body and Soul, 4). Subsequently, BPP members who traveled to North Korea lauded its universal health care system, as emblematic of the benefits of socialism. According to Brown, every North Korean citizen was provided with health care in proper medical care facilities (Interview of Elaine Brown, The Black Panther 5, no. 14 (October 3, 1970)). In his notes from his 1970 trip to North Korea, Eldridge Cleaver explained that after Japanese colonialism, the child mortality rate had been reduced by half and the average life span increased by twenty years. He was told that a large part of North Korea's state budget goes to health and hygiene ("Eldridge Cleaver Notebooks," 1970, University of California, Berkeley, The Bancroft Library, BANC MSS 91/213c, The Eldridge Cleaver Papers, 1963-1988, Carton 5, Folder 8). In a letter printed in The Black Panther, Kathleen Cleaver testified to the tremendous medical and childcare that she received during her pregnancy in North Korea (Kathleen Cleaver, "A Message to the Black G.I.'s in South Korea," The Black Panther 5, no. 24 (December 14, 1970)). On the surface, North Korea's health care system appeared exemplary. However, as North Korea scholar Andrei Lankov suggests, even at the best of times, the North's health care facilities were plagued with outdated equipment, limited amounts of medicine, and over crowdedness. Contrary to what Cleaver said in 1970, the North's health care system was also seriously underfunded (Andrei Lankov, The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia (Oxford University Press, 2013), 64-66). The BPP's lionization of the North's health care successes was a weapon to be used in critiquing the health disasters experienced in American ghetto communities. By portraying the DPRK's heath care system as benevolent and successful, they were pointing out the warped priorities and failures of capitalism experienced in their communities.

The Panthers who visited the DPRK in 1969 and 1970 portrayed the North Korean countryside as vibrant and productive. A stable economy with jobs for all and an infrastructure with safe housing and electricity were portrayed as the benefits of a socialist society that placed the living standards of its people as its top priority. Following her 1970 trip to North Korea, BPP member Elaine Brown wrote that the "the entire (North Korean) countryside has electricity in all houses" and that "most of the people even in the countryside have television." Brown contended that, "The people who live on cooperative farms actually live at a much higher living standard than the average person in the United States who would be involved in farming work, or even a worker" (Interview of Elaine Brown, The Black Panther 5, no. 14 (October 3, 1970)). The group of American radicals who visited Pyongyang in 1970 saw no homeless beggars, no prostitutes, and no hustlers on its streets. Gambling houses, cheap bars, rundown houses or apartment buildings were also noticeably absent (Brown, A Taste of Power, 226). The Panthers represented North Korean cities as sites of socialist success. The stable but basic infrastructure of North Korean cities appealed to Eldridge Cleaver. During his 1969 trip to North Korea, Cleaver visited the industrial city of Hamhung and pronounced that it was "built for the needs of the people" while in American cities, "technology is highly advanced but serves only to exploit and murder people, to demean and destroy their humanity" ("1969 Statement from the U.S. People's Anti-Imperialist Delegation to Korea," University of California, Berkeley, The Bancroft Library, BANC MSS 91/213c, The Eldridge Cleaver Papers, 1963-1988, Carton 5, Folder 4). To Cleaver, American inner cities were symbols of the excesses of capitalism. If Cleaver and his BPP fellow travelers idealized North Korean urban and rural life, they understood well the plight of African Americans in their communities who struggled to find jobs and decent food, and who lived in rat-infested, dilapidated housing projects. In their ten-point platform, the Panthers called for decent housing and the full employment of African Americans (Newton, Revolutionary Suicide, 122-123). The general impoverishment that plagued urban Black America made North Korean cities seem to the visitors' attractive models for building socialism.

The Panthers did not truly believe North Korea was "paradise," but the rhetoric served an important purpose: it highlighted the racial discrimination and socioeconomic inequalities within the United States. At a time when inner cities of America were overwhelmed with drugs, crime, and violence, North Korea, at least on the surface, appeared to be free of these problems. Thus, North Korean socialism appeared to suggest a powerful critique of American capitalism. By 1971, the BPP-North Korean relationship was noticeably weakening as no Panthers traveled to North Korea (Rafalko, MH/Chaos, 119). The primary reason for the weakening of its relations with the North Korean leadership was the growing isolation of the international section of the BPP even before the notable Cleaver-Newton "split" of 1971 (Kathleen Cleaver, "Back to Africa," 238). During his time abroad, Eldridge Cleaver became estranged from the "on the ground" struggle of the BPP in the United States. As historian Sean Malloy explains, "By mid-1970, he appears to have been better versed in the nuances of Juche, Korean reunification, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict than he was with the evolving struggles on the streets of Oakland, Chicago, or Harlem" (Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon," 564). While Cleaver was leading the international section of the BPP, the Panthers based in the United States were emphasizing change at the grassroots level in the black community, with programs ranging from community control of the local police force to food and health programs for the poor and dispossessed. Privately, Cleaver criticized the new emphasis on local changes on the grounds that the Panthers were working within the white man's exploitative system (Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon," 563-564). Meanwhile, Huey Newton questioned the direction that Cleaver was taking The Black Panther newspaper, as it began to focus more on the world communist movement than the struggle at home (David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1993), 224). The BPP's radical stance, and its ability to garner support from socialist nations, above all China and North Korea, and throughout urban Black America, alarmed the FBI. J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, branded the Panthers the country's "most dangerous and violence-prone of all extremist groups" and focused the actions of the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) on subverting the BPP ("FBI Brands Black Panthers 'Most Dangerous' of Extremists,'" New York Times (July 14, 1970), 21). Hoover's goal was "to disrupt, discredit and destroy" the BPP. As Ward Churchill asserts, COINTELPRO was so successful in disrupting the activities of the Panthers that by the end of 1971, "the BPP in the sense that it was originally conceived [in 1965] was effectively destroyed." COINTELPRO had disastrous effects for the Panthers by fueling the growing distrust between its international section and those based in the United States when the FBI produced a series of forged letters between the two. The FBI's infiltration program worked and Newton expelled Cleaver and the entire international section from the BPP in February 1971 (Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon," 565).

The BPP was committed to overthrowing the American capitalist system and ending racial discrimination but the opposing personalities within the organization coupled with COINTELPRO destroyed the organization from within. In addition, as Joshua Bloom and Waldo Martin argue, black radicalism lost much of its momentum in the early 1970s as the United States normalized relations with revolutionary governments, African Americans achieved greater electoral representation, better access to government employment, more employment opportunities due to affirmative action, as well as entrance to elite colleges and universities. The military draft had also been cut as Nixon wound down the war in Vietnam (Bloom and Martin, Black Against Empire, 390-393). Like other black revolutionary organizations, the Panthers lost much of its popular support in the black community due to the new socioeconomic opportunities being offered to young African Americans. In the winter of 1971, Newton informed the governments of Cuba, North Korea, and North Vietnam of Cleaver's expulsion from the BPP. This act, together with Mao Zedong's welcoming of "Pig Nixon" to Beijing in 1972, deepened Cleaver's increasing resentment of the communist world (Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon," 567). But by this time, the romance of China and North Korea with the BPP had cooled. The ending of the BPP-North Korean relationship coincided not only with the internal rift within the BPP but also with the easing of tensions between the United States and China. This suggests that the North Koreans may have also been engaging in a mini-détente of their own. Richard Nixon's visit to China ended twenty-five years of noncontact between the two sides. Perhaps the North Korean leadership sensed that the world communist movement was changing and that an alliance with the BPP hurt its ability to gain American support for ending the Korean War and moving toward Korean reunification. According to an East German diplomatic wire, the DPRK leadership supported China's hosting of Nixon because he "would not arrive in Beijing as a victor but as a defeated." In addition, the Chinese leadership agreed to bring up the "Korean question" in talks with the U.S. president ("Note on a Conversation with the First Secretary of the USSR Embassy, Comrade Kurbatov, on 10 March 1972 in the GDR Embassy," Political Archive of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Obtained by NKIDP. (accessed October 1, 2013)). Todor Zhivkov, leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party, visited North Korea in 1973 and explained to Kim Il Sung that peaceful coexistence with the United States was a "class, internationalist policy." After official talks, Kim Il Sung told Zhivkov that he supported peaceful coexistence with the West ("Memorandum on the Conversation between Todor Zhivkov and Kim Il Sung," Personal collection of former Bulgarian diplomat Georgi Mitov. Obtained by the Bulgarian Cold War Research Group. (accessed October 1, 2013)). Thus, it may not have been a one-sided breakup as Cleaver's notes suggest. The North Korean leaders may have also sought to part ways with the BPP and the Newton-Cleaver split provided the perfect opportunity for doing so. The changing dynamics of the Cold War may have hastened the dissolution of the BPP-North Korean relationship. By 1972, the international section, based in Algiers, had practically dissolved with many members having returned to the United States and some having fled to other African nations. Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver moved to France in January 1973 and returned to the United States in 1975 (Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon," 567-569). Upon his return from exile, Eldridge Cleaver transformed from staunch Marxist-Leninist to an evangelical Christian and later created his own religion called Christlam, which had a military branch called Guardians of the Sperm. Kathleen Cleaver divorced her husband in 1987. Struggling with crack cocaine addiction in his later years, Eldridge Cleaver died in 1998. Kathleen Cleaver went back to school and eventually became a law professor at Yale University (Somini Sengupta, "Memories Of A Proper Girl Who Was A Panther," New York Times (June 17, 2000), C10).

The BPP and the North Korean leadership were drawn to one another in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Panthers were fighting to overthrow the capitalist system on their own terms. Likewise, North Korean leaders faced the continued legacy of an unfinished war, American hostility and blockade as they sought to reunify Korea under the leadership of the DPRK. The Panthers saw urban Black America as a colony that was oppressed by the racist American government while the North Korean leadership and its propagandists depicted South Korea as a U.S. colony and puppet state. The Panthers wanted the "pigs" (police) out of the inner cities of America so that black Americans could live freely, and the North Korean leadership wanted the Americans out of South Korea so that they could reunify the Korean peninsula. While the alliance was short-lived, the BPP-North Korean relationship sheds light on both the international politics of the DPRK and the internationalization of the BPP.

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“Relations of friendship and cooperation” between the DPRK and the Sandinistas

In 1979, Nicaragua established diplomatic relations with the DPRK, shortly after the Sandinista movement, called Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) took power in the country. In 1985, the Koreans were giving the Sandinistas aid including a small number of advisers, patrol boats, artillery, trucks, with the CIA thinking there was a larger “supply relationship” between the two countries. Two years later, in September 1987, the South Korean National Democratic Front or Hanminjon, which favored the DPRK, visited Cuba and Nicaragua. This was one year after Daniel Ortega, traveled to Pyongyang, and was followed by, in 1988, Nicaragua being a “handful of countries to boycott the 1988 Seoul Olympics.” Sadly, in 1990, the Sandinistas were voted out of office, undoubtedly do to the U$ aggression against the country, and the embassy of the DPRK in the country closed in 1995. When Ortega was re-elected in 2006, “he re-established Nicaraguan relations with North Korea” and in January 2017, a delegation from the DPRK headed by Choe Ryong Hae “attended the inauguration of Daniel Ortega for his third term as President of Nicaragua,” showing their deep connection (Eric Talmadge, “Senior North Korean leader to attend Nicaragua inauguration,” AP, Jan 6, 2017). However, this alone does not tell the full story. On August 24, 1979, the DPRK and Nicaragua agreed to “establish diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors'' (Reuters, “North Korean in Nicaragua,” New York Times (reprinted in), Mar 15, 1982; “North Korea-Nicaragua Tie,” New York Times, Aug 24, 1979; Dae-Ho Byun, North Korea’s Foreign Policy: The Juche Ideology and the Challenge of Gorbachev’s New Thinking (US: Research Center for Peace and Unification of Korea, 1991), p 108; Robert S. Leiken, Why Nicaragua Vanished: A Story of Reporters and Revolutionaries (US: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp 65, 119, 204; CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, Directory of the Republic of Nicaragua: A Reference Aid (Washington, D.C.: CIA, Aug 1, 1998), p 50; Danielle L. Chubb, Contentious Activism and Inter-Korean Relations (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), p 230; Wayne Limberg, “Soviet military support for third-world Marxist regimes,” The USSR and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World (ed. Mark N. Katz, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp 53, 64, 151; Charles K. Armstrong, Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1992 (US: Cornell University Press, 2013), pp 209, unknown page; Lee Edwards, The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America (US: Simon & Schuster, 1999), pp 242, 251; Robin Road and John Cavanagh, “Don’t Neglect the Impoverished South,” Diversity and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Reader (ed edited by Ernest J. Wilson III, US: Psychology Press, 2004), p 63; Timothy C. Brown, pro-Contra book titled When the AK-47s Fall Silent: Revolutionaries, Guerrillas, and the Dangers of Peace (US: Hoover Institution Press, 2000), pp 28, 45, 91; AP, “Nicaragua Aide Seeks Arms in North Korea,” New York Times (reprinted in), Apr 4, 1984).

Three years later, the foreign minister of the former, Li Chong Ok, arrived in Managua “for a three-day visit to discuss widening his Government’s aid program to Nicaragua.” But there was more. Not only did Daniel Ortega come to Pyongyang in 1983 (and 1986) along his brother Humberta Ortega, Defense Minister, in 1984, but Sandinistas trained in the DPRK (also in Cuba and the Mideast) like Costa Rican-born revolutionary, Plutarco Hernandez, who has also studied at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. Arms shipments to Nicaragua from the DPRK, Cuba, and Eastern Europe increased in 1989 as Soviet aid waned. At the same time, this state of “socialist orientation” in Nicaragua, or a “gain for Marxism-Leninism” as others called it, had an ambassador in the later 1980s from the DPRK there named Adolfo Moncada (there was also an ambassador from the ROK). They also joined the DPRK in a boycott of the ROK Olympics in 1988 since they had refused to hold it in the northern half of Korea! It is also worth noting that Daniel Ortega met personally with Kim Il Sung in May 1983. Nicaragua received much more Soviet aid from 1983-1987 than any time prior as Somoza was in power before 1979. Even with this, the Soviets had their demise but the Koreans stuck with them, and received gifts (in 1982) from the Nicaraguan government, one of which is "an upright grinning alligator, holding out a wooden tray of cocktail glasses...with a matching ashtray" which sits in the International Friendship Exhibition Hall on Mount Myohyang in the DPRK. In 1984, the Nicaraguans visited "North Korea and the Soviet Union in search of arms supplies" to fight the US-backed Contras off once and for all.

Sadly, in 1990, the Sandinistas lost in elections that Fidel Castro reportedly warned (as claimed by a conservative author) the Sandinistas against engaging in at all. If Fidel said that, it would be because he recognized that there would be manipulation at work, creating a Western "democracy" in Nicaragua, since the Contras had wanted the elections, meaning that the country was no longer the "hub of the revolutionary wheel in Central America" and a "base for leftist insurgency" in the region, for Cuba and the Soviets, as the CIA declared in 1981, the same year that the DPRK pledged to build "3 industrial plants, 3 hospitals, and 3 educational centers..in Nicaragua free of charge"! While the Sandinistas turned over electoral power to their enemies, the loose alliance of parties called the National Opposition Union/Unión Nacional Opositora (UNO), led by Violeta Barrios de Chamorro "courageously," their defeat was horrible for the Nicaraguan people. As a result, Chamorro ended "ended 11 years of rule by Ortega's Sandinista Front" (1979-1990), and relations between the DPRK and Nicaragua were soon suspended, with UNO pledging to "end the war and the military draft, privatize State-controlled concerns and return confiscated land and property to its owners." UNO would not have the widespread support the Sandinistas had, not at all, with the country in ruins after the victory of UNO in the elections, and the decentralization of the government, bringing "the police and military under civilian control...cut[ting] the military's numbers." Still the country was "thwarted by unpleasant realities – poverty, hunger and continued US interest in the region," resulting in the UNO making more and more compromises.

In the years to come, Nicaragua went through tough times. In 1996, Daniel Ortega campaigned under the FSLN manner, saying he was "a social democrat in favour of a free-market economy" (a concession to the bourgeoisie) and "a government for everyone" while Mr. Aleman, a conservative, called for "a departure from the [supposedly] authoritarian and inefficient rule of the Sandinistas" and criticized the current government "for the country's serious economic problems." With Aleman viewing Sandinista "confiscations as thefts, the Sandinistas defended them as legitimate redistribution of wealth from the dictatorial regime of Mr. Anastasio Somoza they fought against." During the presidential race, "Mr. Aleman declared himself the winner in the presidential race but Mr. Ortega refused to concede defeat and charged that there were irregularities in the vote count" even as observers said it was "fair" with the FSLN remaining "the single largest party with 36 seats while the three-party Liberal Alliance captured a total of 42 and, with the support of other conservatives, patched together an absolute majority in the 93-seat legislature." Aleman, when he took power, "proposed a "national pact" to favour "reconciliation" and economic progress to pull Nicaragua out of its widespread poverty." Aleman would eventually siphon "some US$100 million from government coffers, which may be chump change where you're from, but not in Nicaragua" and in 1998, "Hurricane Mitch savaged the country...killing 4000 people and destroying a surreal 70% of the infrastructure" and the next president, "Enrique Bolaños...put Alemán in jail...but it was too late, in a way." In 2001, Ortega tried again under the Sandinistas, saying that he vowed to follow "market-based policies" (a move to entice some of the bourgeoisie) and "seek good relations with the United States." Even so, some "U.S. officials expressed concern about his party's past ties with terrorists and its past socialist policies" while the candidate of the Liberal and Constitutional Party for President, "Mr Enrique Bolaños promised to continue the free-market policies of outgoing President Arnoldo Alemán." Again, Ortega alleged that there were irregularities and "questioned the turnout recorded by the electoral council, which was much higher than the usual" but the OAS said it was ok. This time, Ortega "conceded defeat in the presidential elections to the Liberal and constitutionalist party (PLC) candidate, in his third consecutive election loss." In December 2001, Ortega announced that FSLN members would "take their seats in Congress on 9 January 2002" which resolved "the impasse over the composition of the new Parliament" and on January 10, Mr. Enrique Bolaños became the president of Nicaragua itself.

In November 2006, there were parliamentary elections, for the National Assembly, were held in Nicaragua. The main issue in the 2006 election was "the economy and how to deal with poverty in one of the poorest countries in the Americas where over 80 per cent of the population lives on less than two dollars per day" with Ortega of the FSLN pledging to end "unbridled capitalism" while increasing foreign investment as part of a plan to reduce poverty in the country. His plan included establishing development banks for agriculture and small businesses, the latter leading to a petty bourgeoisie, while the "conservative camp was deeply divided" and the "Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS)...promised to build 10 000 houses per year." In an election were almost 67% of the registered voters turned out to the polls, "the FSLN came in first with 38 seats while the PLC won 25. The ALN finished third with 22 seats and five seats went to the MRS (see note)." The following year, 2007, on January 10, Mr. René Núñez Téllez of the FSLN was elected as the "new Speaker for a two-year term" and Mr. Ortega was sworn in "as President of the country on the same day"! This victory led to renewed relations with the DPRK.

In 2007, the DPRK was on a roll, as it had by that point "normalized relations with most of europe, most of asia...most of africa, and much of latin america...and australia and canada and [the]...UK as U$ diplomats grumbled. In May, Ortega re-established "formal diplomatic relations with North Korea and rejected criticism of the Asian country's nuclear weapons program," approving the "credentials of North Korean Ambassador Jae Myong So." Ortega said that "It isn't right, it isn't fair" that some countries in the world "arm themselves then want to prohibit others from arming themselves in self-defense" ("Nicaragua Re-Establishes North Korea Ties," *The Panama Investor Blog* (reprinting from *Newsmax*), May 19, 2007; Trevor London, "Nicaragua and North Korea, Comrades Again," May 27, 2007; Joachim Bamrud, "Nicaragua Building Ties With Iran," *Newsmax*, Aug 15, 2007; Dr. Obed Yao Asamoah, *The Political History of Ghana (1950-2013): The Experience of a Non-Conformist* (US: AuthorHouse, 2014), p 382; Lonely Planet, "History" of Nicaragua, accessed Mar 15, 2018; INTUR, "History and Culture" of Nicaragua, 2018; "Nicaragua embraces North Korea," *North Korean Economy Watch*, May 18, 2007). This is to be applauded as we cannot forget that the DPRK helped "the regime of the oppressed Nicaragua with medicines and medical assistance" during the 1980s.

As one conservative writer groaned, “Daniel Ortaga never forgets a comrade” and quoted a press release from KCNA (seemingly), noting that Ortega argued that “the DPRK’s access to deterrent for self-defence is a clear manifestation of the independent stand and this greatly encourages us...stressing that the Songun policy of Kim Jong Il is very just” while he also “affirmed the will to further develop the friendly relations between the two countries and strengthen cooperation in the international arena.” Ortega also said that “we’re going to strengthen relations.” One month before, in April, the DPRK re-established relations with Myanmar (also called Burma), which “had been suspended since 1983 after an explosion in Yangon, the capital of Burma, during a visit by South Korean ruler Chun Doo-Hwan” was blamed on the DPRK even though Pyongyang said that “the South Korean leader himself had orchestrated the incident.” In August of the same year, Nicaragua began building its ties with Iran, calling the U$ a “terrorist nation” (condemning the U$ invasion of Iraq and Bush II as a “world tyrant”) with Iran ready to invest nearly $500 million in Nicaragua, build a “new hydroelectric project, invest in a new port [,] and build 10,000 new houses,” with this alarming Iran haters in the West, who were also shocked by the new warm relations with Venezuela since the country joined ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas), a political-economic alliance created by Venezuela. Ortega also said at the time that “world trade was dominated by the tyranny of global capitalism” which is true while many Nicaraguans seemed to favor the U$, with which Nicaragua had normalized relations. Still, the country had ended “a long neoliberal period that had...failed to kickstart the country’s economy” and the energy crisis in the country was “seemingly solved via a deal with Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez,” with a government which is “dedicated to social justice and peace” in power. There are no more “severe conditions” like the ones that UNO and US aid policies produced.

By 2009, Ortega was fiery as ever. In November, he lashed out at the U$ for “criticizing Iran and North Korea for their nuclear programs,” and asked, before the UN General Assembly, “what right the United States has to question a country that is seeking nuclear development for peaceful – or even military – purposes” and added that “the best path for humanity is for nuclear weapons not to exist, and he called on the United States to take the first step in nuclear disarmament" (“Nicaragua’s Ortega Lashes Out at US,” VOA, Nov 1, 2009; “Nicaragua Strengthens Ties With North Korea,” The Tico Times, Oct 1, 2010; Larisa Epatko, “Nicaragua’s Ortega Projected to Win Third Term, Opens Door to Long Rule,” PBS, Nov 7, 2011). The U$ propaganda outlet of the Cold War era, Voice of America (VOA) grumbled that “Mr. Ortega has a long history of opposing the United States.” The following year, Ortega received Kim Hyong Jun at his house in Managua for one hour, the foreign minister of the DPRK and discussed “strengthening ties between the two countries,” with this Kim in “Nicaragua...as part of a three country tour of the Americas that also includes visits to Cuba and Venezuela” and he told Ortega that “Kim Jong Il sends his fond greetings.” The state media of Nicaragua responded by saying that the DPRK was a “brother nation” that the latter “demonstrated “solidarity and cooperation” with the Sandinista Revolution in the 1980s.

In 2011, there was another set of elections for the “90 directly-elected seats in the National Assembly” with the Sandinistas, which had implemented “a series of programmes aimed at providing the poor with microcredits, farm animals and transport subsidies...[and] provided a US$ 33 monthly bonus for government workers” since the election in 2006, some of which undoubtedly grew the country’s petty bourgeoisie. While the “country’s Constitution prohibits consecutive presidential terms” Ortega filed a suit in 2009 “before the Constitutional Chamber of the Nicaraguan Supreme Court, arguing the presidential term limit violated his constitutional rights" and not long after "the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the President," a ruling which was "subsequently approved by the Supreme Electoral Council," allowing Ortega to seek another term. Ortega, challenged by "Mr. Fabio Gadea Mantilla's Liberal Independent Party (PLI) and former President Arnoldo Alemán's PLC" said they would "fight corruption" and "restore rule of law and democracy to Nicaragua." The Sandinistas, who argued that "no previous government had helped the people as the FSLN had" and Ortega who "promised to reduce poverty and illiteracy" were victors, with the final results giving "62 seats to the FSLN and 26 to the PLI. The PLC took the remaining two seats. In all, 37 women were elected" and in the presidential elections "Mr. Ortega was re-elected with 62 per cent of the votes" with the opposition "alleging fraud" but this was rejected. On his victory, Raul Castro of Cuba and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela "extended their congratulations" for Ortega, whose campaign "enjoyed popular support, particularly for his vast social aid programs," while the "political opposition in Nicaragua" was "fractured and struggled to gain momentum behind any one candidate during the campaign," with Ortega building a "strong base of support among the poor with the roll out of social welfare programs, providing subsidized food, clothing, health services and education programs."

In 2012 and 2013, Ortega was moving along, as so was Nicaragua. Some said, rightly, that he was making "great strides towards making health care, education, and work more accessible to the masses" noting that "unemployment is now just 5%" even though underemployment was still high," but that due to readily available "education and health care...there is much hope for Nicaragua's future." It was noted that "Nicaragua still has a long way to go," since the "main source of work" in the country "remains agriculture and sweat-shop style labour" and education is widely available but "many students cannot afford to go to school when their families need money to make end's meet." Still, good efforts have been made! The following year, in July, a Nicaraguan foreign delegation went to the DPRK, showing the strong connection between the countries. In 2014 and 2015, Nicaragua and the DPRK moved together. In October of 2014, the DPRK supported Nicaragua's recommendation to take "practical measures to provide safer working conditions, suitable for its citizens" at the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a process of the UN Human Rights Council which "provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries" and to fulfill "their human rights obligations." In fact, of the 268 recommendations, 113 enjoyed the support of the the DPRK government, 4 were "partially accepted," 58 were "noted," 10 were not supported, and 83 were rejected on the grounds they "seriously distorted the reality of and slandered the country."The countries which posed resolutions the DPRK didn't support included Italy, Chile, Mexico, Hungary, Belgium, Mexico, Botswana, Australia, Greece, and Germany. The countries that posed recommendations which were rejected on the grounds they "seriously distorted the reality of and slandered the country," 70 (about 85% percent) of which were countries in Europe and North America. The other 13 (15% percent) were scattered across the globe, but mostly in East Asia and Latin America, with only two in the Mideast and Africa. This meant that about 65% of the recommendations, 175 of them, were accepted. If you remove the 83 horrid ones, which distorted the reality of the country and slandered the Koreans, as those recommendations are not legitimate, then of these 185 recommendations, then 95% of the legitimate recommendations were accepted either fully, partially, or noted by the government itself, which is quite impressive, considering that these recommendations come from countries which are broadly bourgeois. The following year, Nicaragua took a strong stand. They said they would not join the Paris agreement because, in the words of the lead envoy, Paul Oquist, “we’re not going to submit because voluntary responsibility is a path to failure. We don’t want to be an accomplice to taking the world to 3 to 4 degrees and the death and destruction it represents.” This response was, and is, totally understandable. However, with the DPRK ratifying the Paris Accord on November 4, 2016, Nicaragua did the same, acceding to it on October 23, 2017. This leaves, of the countries that signed the agreement, specifically Angola, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Russia, South Sudan, Turkey, and Yemen, along with the U$, which delivered the official notice to withdrawal on August 4, 2017 with earliest withdrawal date being November 4, 2020, as the only ones that have not ratified the agreement. Some have criticized the accord, like James Hansen, of being fraudulent for no binding mechanisms, saying in December 2015 “it’s just worthless words. There is no action, just promises. As long as fossil fuels appear to be the cheapest fuels out there, they will be continued to be burned.” At the same time, some bourgeoisie have noted the agreement has the assumption that major polluters “will somehow drive down their carbon pollution voluntarily and assiduously without any binding enforcement mechanism to measure and control CO2 emissions at any level from factory to state, and without any specific penalty gradation or fiscal pressure...to discourage bad behaviour,” which is unlikely.

2016 was another year of victory for the Nicaraguan people. The Sandinistas won “70 of 90 seats at stake in the 92-member National Assembly” and the “Liberal Constitutionalist Party (PLC), which allied with the FSLN in the outgoing legislature, took 13 seats” with these elections following the “dismissal of 28 opposition members” and hence were “boycotted by the opposition.” For the third consecutive term, thanks to a 2014 constitutional amendment which “allowed for indefinite presidential re-election,” Ortega was re-elected and his wife, “Ms. Rosario Murillo, became Vice President” with both sworn in “on 10 January 2017.” During the campaign for this election, the Sandinistas promised to “work for peace, stability and the security of Nicaraguan families” and during this election, a “50-per cent quota for each sex, introduced by the 2012 amendments to the electoral law, was applied for the first time,” with 42 women elected, which was “up from 37 in 2011.” Article 147 of the Constitution says that “those related to the president either by blood or affinity” cannot be “a candidate for president or vice president” but lawmakers differ “over the definition of the affinity relationship.” Affinity, as defined in the fourth edition of the *Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, is a relationship through marriage or a “close relationship” and connection. This would seem to disqualify Ortega and his wife. Other dictionaries call it a “natural attraction, liking, or feeling of kinship” or an “inherent similarity between persons or things.” However, the Nicaraguan government has a valid point, saying that the Constitution of Nicaragua only “prohibits only blood relatives — like two siblings, or a parent and a child — from being on the same ticket” but not those who are married, with Ortega’s wife, Rosario Murillo, crediting the “Sandinista revolution for opening the doors to her candidacy as a woman” (Frances Robles, “Wife and Running Mate: A Real-Life ‘House of Cards’ in Nicaragua,” *New York Times*, Oct 30, 2016; Holly K. Sonneland, “Update: Five Things to Know ahead of Nicaragua’s General Elections,” Americas Society/Council of the Americas, Aug 2016). It is worth noting that in the constitution in 2014, a bit different from the 2005, 1987, or 1974 Constitutions, says that:

“Independence, sovereignty, and national self-determination are inalienable rights ofthe people and the bases of the Nicaraguan nation.” (Article 1)

…

“Nicaragua is an independent, free, sovereign, unitary and indivisible State. It is organized as a democratic and social state based on the rule of law which promotes as superior values the protection of the dignity of the people through the legal order, liberty, justice, equality, solidarity, social responsibility and, in general, the primacy of human rights, ethics, and the common good” (Article 6)

…

“All individuals are equal before the law and have the right to equal protection. Thereshall be no discrimination based on birth, nationality, political belief, race, gender, language, religion, opinion, origin, economic position or social condition” (Article 27)

…

“Nicaraguans have the right to freely express their convictions in public or in private, individually or collectively, in oral, written or any other form” (Article 30)

…

“All persons shall have the right to have their physical, psychological and moral integrity respected. No one shall be subjected to torture, procedures, punishments, or inhumane, cruel or degrading treatment. Violation of this right constitutes a crime and shall be punished by law.” (Article 36)

…

“No one shall be detained for debts. This principle does not limit the mandates of competent legal authority for the non-fulfillment of alimony duties. It is the duty of all national or foreign citizens to pay their debts” (Article 41)

…

“Unconditional equality of all Nicaraguans in the enjoyment of their political rights, in the exercise of these rights, and in the fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities, is established; there exists absolute equality between men and women” (Article 48)

…

“Citizens have the right, individually or collectively, to petition, denounce irregularities and make constructive criticism to the Powers of the State or to any authority, to obtain a quick resolution or response and to have the result communicated in the time period established by the law.” (Article 52)

…

“The State shall give special attention in all its programs to the disabled and to the relatives of those killed or victimized by war in general.” (Article 56)

…

“Nicaraguans have the right to truthful information. This right comprises the freedom to seek, receive and disseminate information and ideas, be they spoken or written, in graphic or by any other chosen procedure.” (Article 66)

…

“The labor of Nicaraguans is the fundamental means to satisfy the needs of society and of persons, and is the source of the wealth and prosperity of the nation. The State shall strive for full and productive employment of all Nicaraguans under conditions that guarantee the fundamental rights of the person.” (Article 80)

…

“Full labor union freedom exists in Nicaragua. Workers shall organize themselves voluntarily in unions, which shall be constituted in conformity with that established by the law.” (Article 87)

…

“The State has the obligation to enact laws intended to promote actions to ensure that no Nicaraguan shall be the object of discrimination for reasons of language, culture or origin” (Article 91)

…

“The principal function of the State in the economy is to achieve the sustainable human development in the country; to improve the living conditions of the people and to realize a more just distribution of wealth in the pursuit of a good life. The State must play the role of facilitator in the production sector which creates the conditions which allow the private sector and the workers to pursue their economic, productive and labor activities in a framework of democratic governance and full legal certainty, so that they may contribute to the economic and social development of the country.” (Article 98)

…

“The natural resources are national patrimony. The preservation of the environment, and the conservation, development and rational exploitation of the natural resources are responsibilities of the State; the State may sign contracts for the rational exploitation of these resources in a transparent, public procedure when required by the national interest” (Article 102)

…

“Free health care is guaranteed for the vulnerable sectors of the population, giving priority to the completion of programs benefiting

mothers and children. Specific family and community health programs shall be developed" (Article 105)

…

"The land reform is the fundamental instrument for the democratization of ownership and the just distribution of land; it is a means constituting an essential part for the global promotion and strategy of ecological reconstruction and the sustainable economic development of the country" (Article 106)

…

"The public officials are accountable to the people for the proper discharge of their functions and must inform them of their official work and activities. They must pay attention and listen to their problems and try to solve them. Public functions must be exercised for the benefit of the people." (Article 131)

…

"Legislative Power is exercised by the National Assembly through delegation and by the mandate of the people. The National Assembly is composed of ninety members (diputados) and their alternates elected by universal, equal, direct, free, and secret suffrage through the system of proportional representation. In accordance with what is established in the electoral law, twenty national members are elected and seventy members in the departmental and autonomous regions." (Article 132)

…

> *"The election of the President and Vice President of the Republic takes place by universal, equal, direct, free and secret vote. Those who receive a relative majority of the votes cast shall be elected." (Article 146)*

The same year, the U$ Congress passed a bill to sanction Nicaragua, passing the House but not the Senate luckily for Nicaraguans. Additionally, Nicaragua expelled three U$ government officials in the country "on temporary assignment," possibly related to these sanctions. [10] Relations with the DPRK were strong without question. In September, Kim Yong Nam, president of the Presidium of the SPA, took "part in the 17th NAM Summit as head of a DPRK delegation" where they "met heads of state of different countries in the period of summit" and met with, on the side, "the prime minister of Uganda, the vice-president of El Salvador, the vice-president of Nicaragua and the vice prime minister of Vietnam who doubles as its foreign minister." In November, member of the Presidum of the WPK's political bureau, Choe Ryong Hae "met the presidents of Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua" and led a "DPRK state and party delegation on a visit to Cuba to mourn the demise of Fidel Castro Ruz, the supreme leader of the Cuban revolution" as *Rodong Sinmun* described him. The same month, Kim Yong Nam "sent a message of greeting to Daniel Ortega Saavedra upon his reelection as president of Nicaragua" and expressed the "belief that the traditional relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries would grow stronger in keeping with the requirement of the new era" and wished "the Nicaraguan president bigger success in his responsible work for the development of the country and the well being of the people."

Then we move onto 2017. Some declared that Nicaragua was a "poor country" and an "agricultural nation" with a growing industry of tourism, which was bound in bourgeois conceptions (Tim Lambert, "A Short History of Nicaragua," *localhistories.org*, 2017; "Sen. Cruz: 'The U.S. Stands With the People of Nicaragua'," Press Release, Dec 22, 2017). At the same time, the murderous empire bared all its teeth. There were threats that Nicaragua would be sanctioned for supporting Venezuela, with such sanctions imposed by the U$ Treasury Department in November on certain individuals, which the UK supported, even though this would hurt Nicaragua's economy without question. Luckily, the Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act (NICA) failed in the U$ Senate after passing the House "without question"! This showed the true side of liberals, like Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Dick Durvin of Illinois, Bob Menendez of New Jersey, Albio Sires of New Jersey, who sided with conservatives, like Ted Cruz of Texas, Marco Rubio of Florida, David Perdue of Georgia, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida. Cruz decried the "Ortega regime," painting it as some tyrannical monster who is helping a "ruling elite" and allying with "anti-American regimes," Leahy declared that Ortega had "subverted the institutions of democracy" for his own benefit, Menedez said that the U$ must "restore public confidence in democratic institutions," Durbin said that "Nicaragua and Venezuela have tragically gone backwards" unlike the rest of Latin America, and Capito declared that the U$ has a "very long history of supporting human rights and protecting democracy around the world." Of course, such imperialist rhetoric showed that all of them just spoke for the empire through liberal and conservative prisms. In 2017, Nicaragua also gained further ties with Taiwan, with the two countries signing a defense agreement in September. The U$ also declared it would, in January 2019, end the "special status given to 5,300 Nicaraguan immigrants that protects them from deportation." Additionally, Freedom House released a blistering, anti-communist review of Nicaragua having words like "unchecked corruption," "electoral fraud," "subservient," "largely politicized," "retaliation," and "democratic deterioration," to name a few, but admitting that the

> *constitution provides for a directly elected president, and elections are held every five years…the constitution provides for a 92-member unicameral National Assembly…Legislative elections are held every five years…Ortega retains significant popular support, thanks to his adept management of a booming economy and support for social programs…half of each party's candidates for mayoralties and council seats must be women…Religious freedom is generally respected…Academic freedoms are generally respected…Private discussion is usually free…Access to the internet remains unrestricted, and many people speak their minds freely on social networks…Although nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are active…The constitution and laws nominally recognize the rights of indigenous communities…Governmental and nonstate actors generally respect travel, residence, and employment choices….The 2012 Comprehensive Law against Violence toward Women…codified femicide and establishes sentencing guidelines for physical and psychological abuses against women*

The same year, Nicaragua, along with Argentina and Cuba, commemorated "the first anniversary of the death of Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro," but, as some worried, "Nicaragua's close relations to Cuba, Russia and Iran could hurt it in the Trump era...the situation obviously could become complicated." Still, this solidarity should be applauded. In June of that year, the U$ State Department in their Investment Climate Statement thundered that the government was "actively seeking to increase economic growth by supporting and promoting foreign investment" and added that the government emphasized "it pragmatic management of the economy through a model of consensus and dialogue with private sector and labor representatives." The statement went onto say that a "key draw for investors is Nicaragua's relatively low-cost and young labor force," noted that Nicaragua is "a party to the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR)" and has a strong "trade relationship with the United States." It was also noted that Nicaragua currently "offers significant tax incentives in many industries" which include "exemptions from import duties, property tax incentives, and income tax relief" and a well-established "free trade zone regime." After grumbling about "weak governmental institutions, deficiencies in the rule of law...extensive executive control," and transparency, the statement also said that the Nicaraguan government actively worked to "attract foreign direct investment as one of its primary tools to generate economic growth and increase employment" and noted that not only do "foreign and domestic private entities have the right to establish and own business enterprises and engage in all forms of remunerative activity" but the "Government of Nicaragua does not formally screen, review, or approve foreign direct investments." Even the 28,000 property owners whose land was seized by the Nicaraguan government in the 1980s was last compensated in August 2015, while Ortega said that "the government will not act to evict those who have illegally taken possession of private property without discrimination for the nationality of the owner." The statement said that "Nicaragua is a highly-dollarized economy" and added that Ortega "used funds provided by Venezuela through...ALBA...to increase the role of the state and quasi-state actors in the economy" and noted that "the government owns and operates the National Sewer and Water Company (ENACAL), National Port Authority (EPN), National Lottery, and National Electricity Transmission Company (ENATREL). Private sector investment is not permitted in these sectors," saying importantly that "Nicaragua does not have a privatization program."

While Nicaragua condemned the missile tests of the DPRK, the relationship between the two countries was still strong. In January 10, Choe Ryong Hae, special envoy of Kim Jong Un, attended the swearing in of Daniel Ortega in Managua, and met with the presidents of Venezuela (Nicholas Maduro) and Bolivia (Morales Aima), and Cuban first vice-president on the sidelines. In his inaugural speech, as summarized by *Rodong Sinmun*, Ortega said that "Nicaragua has smashed the U.S. aggression and interference and achieved the reconciliation and unity," declaring that "his country would develop the friendly relations with the world progressive peoples respecting its sovereignty" and Hae, afterwards "congratulated him on his reelection and expressed support and solidarity with the cause of the Nicaraguan people" and was subsequently invited to "a reception given by the Nicaraguan government that day"! Again, the relationship between the two countries is undeniably strong. The same year, the Cubans attended the inauguration of Ortega, who is part of the Latin American left, strongly praising the country and its leadership as they are dedicated allies.

Comrades-in-Arms: The DPRK and Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution

In 1974, Venezuela and the DPRK established diplomatic relations, with the latter establishing a diplomatic mission in Caracas (María Gabriela Díaz, "North Korean Embassy in Venezuela Signals Two Peas in a Pod," *PanAM Post*, Jun 26, 2014; East-West Center and the National Committee on North Korea (NCNK), "North Korea in the World: North Korea's External Relations," accessed Mar 18, 2018). At that time, the country was considered by the *Peking Review* as consolidating its national independence but still has a developed bourgeoisie. In 1991, the DPRK started maintaining a trade office in Caracas, "closed for a year in 1999" but later reopened. For all those Spanish language comrades reading this section, I welcome you and look forward to your comments on this section of the article and any other one. In the 1980s, a man named Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias (or Hugo Chavez for short), a career military officer who was born to a "working-class family in Sabaneta" would found the "Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement -200 (MBR-200)" to overthrow the current government. He would fail in a coup against the existing Venezuelan government on February 4, 1992, when he was imprisoned. On February 4, 2013, Executive Vice President Nicolás Maduro Moros (called Nicolas Maduro for short) would read a letter by Hugo Chavez on the 21st anniversary of this momentous event:

> *"In commemorating the XXI anniversary of the civic-military rebellion of February 4, 1992, I want to direct this fervently Bolivarian and revolutionary message to the people and the Armed Forces as an indivisible whole. How much I regret being physically absent from the homeland for the first time in this luminous birth date, but this is what this battle that I am giving for full recovery, here in revolutionary Cuba and sister, demands. However, my spirit and my heart are among you in this day of national dignity. There are dates in which the entire flow of history is revealed and marks the course of the new peoples. There are dates that sign and clear, that become a commitment and pointing to a destiny, that has to happen to calibrate the past and see more clearly the libertarian horizon, that was the glorious February 4, 1992. In that memorable day all the struggles of our people were vindicated. On that memorable day our liberators and our liberators returned by all roads; In that memorable day, Bolivar became a reason to be and entered into battle for now and*

forever…I want to exalt today the role of the Venezuelan woman on February 4th. A Columba Rivas, a Marisol Terán express the large group of women who accompanied the rebellion. They were in the hour of detachment and heroism, with all their fervor homeland, with all their self-denial…From the depths of the hearts of the people, I say with Aquiles Nazoa, that thanks to February 4, each compatriot can, with full certainty, "one day look at the landscape and say this is my city, this is my homeland" Sisters and brothers, today, after 21 years of that civic-military rebellion, of that decision taken with the greatest love for Venezuela, thought of and rethought as the only possible way to have a homeland, we live in a real and truly free country. On February 4 our people saw the dawn of their hope, thanks to the soldier people, they felt again accompanied by patriotic soldiers…I remember that great memorable reflection of that great revolutionary thinker named Walter Benjamin: "The past carries with it a temporal index through which it is remitted to redemption, there is a secret appointment between the generations that were and ours." We can say that this secret meeting took place on February 4, 1992, and the past and present and the future were remitted to that redemption. February 4 has been fully justified by history, those of us who rebelled against the Punto Fijo agreement have been blessed by a people that today is in the vanguard of the struggle for peace and justice and is a living example for the peoples of the world…We were not wrong, that certainty that encouraged us Bolivarian soldiers is identical to the one that in this time embody millions of compatriots, and walks in every corner of the country making reality what was the feeling of that act of rebellion…February 4 was a day that generated forces that are still expanding. February 4 is not over…We still have a great homeland to liberate and, for that reason, we need to be more and more united as a

> *people…Ever onward to victory!!! Independence and Socialist Homeland !!! We will live and we will win!!!"*

After two years in prison, he would be more radicalized, founding the Fifth Republic Movement in 1997, which would exist until 2007 when it was replaced by the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV). He would be elected in 1998 as President of Venezuela. He would be elected, in the years to come, three times to the presidency, holding the presidency until 2013. During this time, he would implement a "political ideology of Bolivarianism" or "socialism of the 21st century," which some would call "Chavismo" which would place "emphasis on the implementation of reforms in the country" called the Bolivarian Revolution, which, during his time in office, included the "implementation of a new constitution, establish[ment of] "democratic participatory councils"... nationalization of several key industries...increase of public financing for medical services and education, and the significant reduction of poverty." In his first term, Chavez would introduce a "new constitution that increased the rights of marginalized groups and altered the structure of the Venezuelan government," in his second term he would introduce "a system of Bolivarian Missions, Communal Councils and cooperatives administered by the workers." He described his policy as anti-imperialist, and would ally with the Cuban, Bolivian, Ecuadoran, and Nicaraguan governments, playing a pivotal role in the creation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), the Bank of the South, and TeleSur. This would profoundly change the relations between the DPRK and Venezuela. A good primer on the early days of the Bolivarian Revolution is an interview with Miguel Rodriquez Torres, who was a "close confidant of Hugo Chavez." The rallying cry, you could say, became ¡La República Popular Democrática de Corea y Venezuela están en solidaridad contra el imperialismo americano! (The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Venezuela are in solidarity against American imperialism!). The 1999 Constitution of Venezuela replacing the old constitution which in Chavez's words, represented the "interests of the oligarchic sector," renamed the country the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the Constitution from the Republic of Venezuela. It is a document showing the democratic nature of the state itself. The following excerpts show this to be the case:

> ***Article 1****: The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is irrevocably free and independent, basing its moral property and values of freedom, equality, justice and international peace on the doctrine of Simón Bolívar, the Liberator. Independence, liberty, sovereignty, immunity, territorial integrity and national self-determination are unrenounceable rights of the Nation.*

> ***Article 2****: Venezuela constitutes itself as a Democratic and Social State of Law and Justice, which holds as superior values of its legal order and actions those of life, liberty, justice, equality, solidarity, democracy, social*

responsibility and, in general, the preeminence of human rights, ethics and political pluralism.

…

***Article 5**: Sovereignty resides untransferable in the people, who exercise it directly in the manner provided for in this Constitution and in the law, and indirectly, by suffrage, through the organs exercising Public Power. The organs of the State emanate from and are subject to the sovereignty of the people.*

…

***Article 12**: Mineral and hydrocarbon deposits of any nature that exist within the territory of the nation, beneath the territorial sea bed, within the exclusive economic zone and on the continental sheaf, are the property of the Republic, are of public domain, and therefore inalienable and not transferable. The seacoasts are public domain property.*

…

***Article 19**: The State shall guarantee to every individual, in accordance with the progressive principle and without discrimination of any kind, not renounceable, indivisible and interdependent enjoyment and exercise of human rights. Respect for and the guaranteeing of these rights is obligatory for the organs of Public Power, in accordance with the Constitution, the human rights treaties signed and ratified by the Republic and any laws developing the same.*

…

***Article 21**: Al[l] persons are equal before the law, and, consequently…No discrimination based on race, sex, creed or social standing shall be permitted, nor, in general, any discrimination with the intent or effect of nullifying or encroaching upon the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on equal terms, of the rights and liberties of every individual…No titles of nobility or hereditary distinctions shall be recognized.*

…

***Article 43**: The right to life is inviolable. No law shall provide for the death penalty and no authority shall apply the same. The State shall protect the life of persons who are deprived of liberty, serving in the armed forces or civilian services, or otherwise subject to its authority.*

…

***Article 53**: Everyone has the right to meet publicly or privately, without obtaining permission in advance, for lawful purposes and without weapons. Meetings in public places may be regulated by law.*

…

***Article 57**: Everyone has the right to express freely his or her thoughts, ideas or opinions orally, in writing or by any other form of expression, and to use for such purpose any means of communication and diffusion, and no censorship shall be established. Anyone making use of this right assumes full responsibility for everything expressed. Anonymity, war propaganda,* *discriminatory messages or those promoting religious intolerance are not permitted. Censorship restricting the ability of public officials to report on matters for which they are responsible is prohibited.*

...

***Article 59**: The State guarantees the freedom of cult and religion. All persons have the right to profess their religious faith and cults, and express their beliefs in private or in public, by teaching and other practices, provided such beliefs are not contrary to moral, good customs and public order. The autonomy and independence of religious confessions and churches is likewise guaranteed, subject only to such limitations as may derive from this Constitution and the law. Father and Mother are entitled to have their sons and daughters receive religious education in accordance with their convictions. No one shall invoke religious beliefs or discipline as a means of evading compliance with law or preventing another person from exercising his or her rights.*

...

***Article 64**: All Venezuelans* who have reached the age of 18 and are not subject to political disablement or civil interdiction are qualified to vote. In state, municipal and parish elections, the right to vote shall be extended to foreign nationals who have reached the age of 18 and have resided in Venezuela for more than ten years, subject to the limitations established in this Constitution and by law, and provided they are not subject to political disablement or civil interdiction.*

…

***Article 68**: Citizens have the right to demonstrate, peacefully and without weapons, subject only to such requirements as may be established by law. The use of firearms and toxic substances to control peaceful demonstrations is prohibited. The activity of police and security corps in maintaining public order shall be regulated by law.*

…

***Article 81**: Any person with disability or special needs has the right to the full and autonomous exercise of his or her abilities and to its integration into the family and community. The State, with the solidary participation of families and society, guarantees them respect for their human dignity, equality of opportunity and satisfactory working conditions, and shall promote their training, education and access to employment appropriate to their condition, in accordance with law. It is recognized that deaf persons have the right to express themselves and communicate through the Venezuelan sign language.*

***Article 82**: Every person has the right to adequate, safe and comfortable, hygienic housing, with appropriate essential basic services, including a habitat such as to humanize family, neighborhood and community relations. The progressive meeting of this requirement is the shared responsibility of citizens and the State in all areas. The State shall give priority to families, and shall guarantee them, especially those with meager resources, the possibility of access to social policies and credit for the construction, purchase or enlargement of dwellings.*

…

***Article 88**: The State guarantees the equality and equitable treatment of men and women in the exercise of the right to work. The state recognizes work at home as an economic activity that creates added value and produces social welfare and wealth. Housewives are entitled to Social Security in accordance with law.*

…

***Article 92**: All workers have the right to benefits to compensate them for length of service and protect them in the event of dismissal. Salary and benefits are labor obligations due and payable immediately upon accrual. Any delay in payment of the same shall bear interest, which constitutes a debt certain and shall enjoy the same privileges and guarantees as the principal debt.*

…

***Article 98**: Cultural creation is free. This freedom includes the right to invest in, produce and disseminate the creative, scientific, technical and humanistic work, as well as legal protection of the author's rights in his works. The State recognizes and protects intellectual property rights in scientific, literary and artistic works, inventions, innovations, trade names, patents, trademarks and slogans, in accordance with the conditions and exceptions established by law and the international treaties executed and ratified by the Republic in this field.*

...

***Article 101**: The State guarantees the issuance, receiving and circulation of cultural information. The communications media have the duty of assisting in the dissemination of the values of folk traditions and the work of artists, writers, composers, motion-picture directors, scientists and other creators of culture of the country. The television media shall include subtitles and translation into Venezuelan sign language for persons with hearing problems. The terms and modalities of these obligations, shall be established by law.*

...

***Article 113**: Monopolies shall not be permitted. Any act, activity, conduct or agreement of private individuals which is intended to establish a monopoly or which leads by reason of its actual effects to the existence of a monopoly, regardless of the intentions of the persons involved, and whatever the form it actually takes, is hereby declared contrary to the fundamental principles of this Constitution. Also contrary to such principles is abuse of a position of dominance which a private individual, a group of individuals or a business enterprise or group of enterprises acquires or has acquired in a given market of goods or services, regardless of what factors caused such position of dominance, as well as in the event of a concentration of demand. In all of the cases indicated, the State shall be required to adopt such measures as may be necessary to prevent the harmful and restrictive effects of monopoly, abuse of a position of dominance and a concentration of demand, with the purpose of protecting consumers and producers* and ensuring the existence of genuine competitive conditions in the economy. In the case of the exploitation of* *natural resources which are the property of the Nation or the providing of services of a public nature, on an exclusive basis or otherwise, the State shall grant concessions for a certain period, in all cases ensuring the existence of adequate consideration or compensation to serve the public interest.*

...

Article 118*: The right of workers and the community to develop associations of social and participative nature such as cooperatives, savings funds, mutual funds and other forms of association is recognized. These associations may develop any kind of economic activities in accordance with the law. The law shall recognize the specificity of these organizations, especially those relating the cooperative, the associated work and the generation of collective benefits. The state shall promote and protect these associations destined to improve the popular economic alternative.*

...

Article 120*: Exploitation by the State of the natural resources in native habitats shall be carried out without harming the cultural, social and economic integrity of such habitats, and likewise subject to prior information and consultation with the native communities concerned. Profits from such exploitation by the native peoples are subject to the Constitution and the law.*

...

***Article 125**: Native peoples have the right to participate in politics. The State shall guarantee native representation in the National Assembly and the deliberating organs of federal and local entities with a native population, in accordance with law.*

…

***Article 130**: Venezuelans have the duty to honor and defend their native land symbols and cultural values and to guard and protect the sovereignty, nationhood, territorial integrity, self-determination and interests of the nation.*

…

***Article 186**: The National Assembly shall consist of Deputies elected in each of the federal entities by universal, direct, personalized and secret ballot with proportional representation, using a constituency base of 1.1% of the total population of the country. Each federal organ shall also elect three additional deputies. The native peoples of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela shall elect three deputies in accordance with the provisions established under election law, respecting the traditions and customs thereof. Each deputy shall have an alternate elected by the same process.*

…

***Article 274**: The organs exercising Citizen Power are charged, in accordance with this Constitution and with the law, with preventing, investigating and punishing actions that undermine public ethics and administrative morals; to see to sound management and legality in the use* *of public property, and fulfillment and application of the principle of legality in all of the State's administrative activities, as well as to promote education as a process that helps create citizenship, together with solidarity, freedom, democracy, social responsibility and work.*

…

Article 299*: The economic regime of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is based on the principles of social justice, democratization, efficiency, free competition, protection of the environment, productivity and solidarity, with a view to ensuring overall human development and a dignified and useful existence for the community. The State, jointly with private initiative, shall promote the harmonious development of the national economy, to the end of generating sources of employment, a high rate of domestic added value, raising the standard of living of the population and strengthen the economical sovereignty of the country, guaranteeing the reliability of the law; the solid, dynamic, sustainable, continuing and equitable growth of the economy to ensure a just distribution of wealth through participatory democratic strategic planning with open consultation.*

…

Article 304*: All waters are property in the Nation's public domain, essential to life and development. The necessary provisions shall be established by law to guarantee the protection, utilization, and recuperation thereof, respecting the phases of the hydrological cycle and zoning criteria.*

…

Article 316*: The taxation system shall seek a fair distribution of public burdens in accordance with the taxpayer's ability to pay, taking into account the principle of progressive taxation, as well as protection of the national economy and raising the standard of living of the population, the foundation therefore being an efficient system for the collection of taxes.*

Fast forward to 2005. Venezuela was lumped in with the other countries as an "enemy." There was a mission mangers for Iran, the DPRK, and Cuba-Venezuela to solve "intelligence challenges" of the murderous empire, with Venezuela as an intelligence priority meaning that "massive resources would be spent on espionage, surveillance and special operations both inside and outside Venezuelan territory"! Obviously this was an utter violation of sovereignty, but the empire didn't care about that, as they flaunt laws all the time without caring if it is legal or not. In September of the same year, Chavez, in an interview, described how much had been spent by the empire on the Iraq War, saying that they appeared to "be preparing for wars against Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela," quoted as saying "they are preparing to dominate the world," which was undoubtedly true. The same month, he spoke before the UN General Assembly. He demanded reform of the UN itself, such as expanding the non-permanent and permanent categories of the Security Council, giving access to new countries, increase inclusion in the UN, ending the permanent veto power (which he called an "elite vestige"), strengthening the role of the Secretary General, calling for a "re-foundation" of the UN which should be in a newly created international city in the Global South. He also said that that "neoliberal globalization" and the fact that the world is so interconnected means that there cannot be a "national solution" to many problems, adding that it is "practically and ethically inadmissible to sacrifice the human species by insanely invoking the validity of a socioeconomic model with a galloping destructive capacity" and saying that more than ever a "new international order" (first proposed in December 1974) should be revived. He also spoke against the ideas of "preventive war" and "responsibility to protect," calling them "very dangerous concepts that delineate imperialism," and noted that over the past seven years, "the Venezuelan people can exhibit important social and economic achievements," specifically noting that "nearly 70% of the population…receive…free medical assistance" as on example. He ended by saying that the Venezuelans will fight for "Latin American integration and for the world," and powerfully declared that "let us not rest our arms, nor rest our souls to save humanity."

The following year, 2006, imperialists declared that Venezuela was getting close to the DPRK. Donald Rumsfeld, of the U$ military establishment, compared "Chavez to Adolf Hitler" while Negroponte accused Venezuela of "being the most serious threat to U.S. interests in Latin America and of seeking closer ties with North Korea and Iran." Many of these statements were so absurd, its best to laugh out loud at these goofballs. In July, Chavez seemed to hint at some close ties with the Koreans, quoted as saying that "the most virulent, loud, and high-handed critics of North Korea are the same ones that, in view of Israeli aggression against innocent men, women and children, say nothing." However, Venezuela had its reservations. That year, they condemned the nuclear weapons tests by the DPRK, with Maduro, then foreign minister, saying that "We condemn all nuclear tests, because of the immense damage to the planet, to life on the planet" (María Gabriela Díaz, "North Korean Embassy in Venezuela Signals Two Peas in a Pod," *PanAM Post*, Jun 26, 2014). Maduro's full statement is worth quoting:

> *"As a matter of principle, Venezuela is against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and condemns these kinds of tests due to the immense damage they cause to the planet. We are against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and we are doing a great effort in all international scenarios so that countries that have nuclear weapons start eliminating them progressively, so that we can move towards a world without nuclear weapons. We have enough destructive elements threatening life on this planet, and we do not need the advancement of these policies of nuclear tests no matter who does them. America, the whole continent, should be declared a nuclear weapons free zone. In that sense we condemn all nuclear weapons tests due to the immense damage they cause to life on this planet which is already deteriorated as a result of a developing model based on consumerism, which has led to global warming and to the destruction of life….[Venezuela opposes the nuclear tests] due to principles and due to our humanist policies…[Nuclear tests should be used for] providing electricity to important regions of the global south that do not enjoy this public service, to treat cancer, and for other aspects related to human life, never for the destruction of human kind."*

While this is a broad and noble statement against nuclear destruction, it is unfortunate as it easily meshes with what the imperialists want, which is why the denunciation of the weapons tests was applauded by the US, not surprisingly. However, later that year, in September, in a speech in which he recommended a book by leftist Noam Chomsky [4], he took a strong stand against climate catastrophe. He told the UN General Assembly that "...the hegemonic pretension of North American Imperialism puts at risk the very survival of the human species" and proceeded to call Bush II the "devil." He went onto criticize Bush II's remarks, noting that the empire works to "try to maintain the current scheme of domination, exploitation and plundering the peoples of the world...impose the democratic model as they conceive it, the false democracy of the elites" and declared that "Mr. Imperialist dictator, that you are going to live the rest of your days with a nightmare," also criticizing the Zionist oppression of Palestinians. He went onto say that "the peoples of the South, the hit people would say: Yankee Empire go home!" said that the "United Nations System...collapsed, collapsed, does not work" with the General Assembly turned into "a purely deliberative, purely deliberative body without any power to impact the least way the terrible reality that the world lives" and proposed against four ideas to strengthen the UN by giving "giving access to new developed countries and underdeveloped countries, the Third World, as new permanent members....[apply]effective methods of attention and resolution of global conflicts...[end] immediate[ly]...that anti-democratic mechanism of the veto...of the Security Council...[and] strengthen...the powers of the Secretary General of the United Nations." From here, he went onto say that Venezuela is an "independent voice" which denounces "the persecution and aggressions of hegemonism against the peoples of the Planet," adding accurately that the "government of the United States has initiated an open aggression" against Venezuela, forcefully making it known that "the Empire is afraid of the truth, of independent voices, accusing us of being extremists. They are the extremists." In his speech, he also said that with Venezuela on the Security Council this would bring "the voice not only of Venezuela, [but] the voice of the Third World, the voice of the peoples of the Planet, [and] there we will be defending dignity and truth." Additionally he said that the "the neoliberal capitalist model that generates misery and poverty," noted that the empire has "already planned, financed and promoted a coup in Venezuela" (in 2002), saying that the empire "continues to support coup movements in Venezuela and against Venezuela, continues to support terrorism" while noting that the CIA are utter terrorists. He ended by saying that "we are men and women of the South, we are carriers, with these documents, with these ideas, with these criticisms, with these reflections that I close my folder and the book I take it, do not forget that I recommend them a lot, with much humility," ending on a powerful note.

In 2007, again bourgeois analysts said that Venezuela was allying itself with the DPRK, along with revisionist China, Cuba, and Iran. Sadly, this year was one of a setback for the Bolivarian Revolution. A constitutional referendum was proposed that have been a "massive overhaul of this country's constitution," including ending "central bank autonomy...suspension of due process during a state of emergency, lowering the age to vote to 16 years...empowering new forms of local direct democracy, establishing new forms of property, consolidating rights of sexual minorities, [and] extending social welfare to self employed workers," reducing the working week to 36 hours from 44 hours, all part of an effort to implement the "aggressive Bolivarian Socialist agenda" or the "start of a new era towards socialism," and increased presidential powers like indefinite re-election of the president. However, it lost in December of that year by a very slim margin of a "little more than 100,000 votes" or a "tiny majority, of around 1.4%...said no," possibly because of certain elements of the proposal like increased presidential powers, even among his supporters (Jeffrey Kofman, "Tension, Then Surprise, Chavez Loses Reform Vote," *ABC News*, Dec 3, 2007; Jens Erik Gould, "Why Venezuelans Turned on Chavez," *Time*, Dec. 3, 2007; "Understanding constitutional reform in Venezuela (a background)," *Sandhaanu.com*, Nov 13, 2007; "Q&A: Venezuela's referendum," *BBC News*, Nov 30, 2007; "Venezuela lawmakers back reforms," *BBC News*, Aug 22, 2007; "Venezuela assembly passes reforms," *BBC News*, Nov 2, 2007; "US hails Chavez referendum defeat," *BBC News*, Dec 3, 2007; "The wind goes out of the revolution," *The Economist*, Dec 6, 2007; Antonio Fabrizio, "Gay rights were part of rejected Venezuelan referendum," *PinkNews*, Dec 4, 2007;

"Chavez urges reform for Venezuela," *BBC News*, Dec 1, 2007). Chavez, in a press conference afterwords, said that "this was a photo finish…To those who voted against my proposal, I thank them and congratulate them…I ask all of you to go home, know how to handle your victory…For now, we couldn't." Some in the bourgeois media said that "many political observers point to the thousands of university students, who…clogged the streets to protest the reform in the weeks leading up to the vote…Chavez's traditional support base didn't show up to vote…[and] poor voters unhappy with the proposed constitutional overhaul said they were more troubled about measures to abolish presidential term limits and facilitate state expropriation of private property than they were enthused by articles that could benefit the poor" but admitted that "Chavez still has many of the poor on his side" and that "the electoral defeat may indeed slow the President down" but it will not stop the momentum moving forward. Still, as one would expect, the White House applauded this move, declaring that "it looks like the people spoke their minds…and I think that bodes well for the country's future and freedom and liberty," by U$-backed opposition mayor Leopoldo Lopez, saying that "I am sure that this victory for the Venezuelan people will have a very important impact in the rest of Latin America," and *The Economist* which declared that Chavez's "plan to install what he calls "21st century socialism"…has been badly punctured," saying that this "setback may also take much of the momentum out of his industrious efforts to form a regional block of allies and client states," except neither turned out to be the case in the years to come.

The following year, 2008, was a bit more positive. As the intelligence establishment of the U$ continued to target Venezuela, Chavez removed his "combative vice-president, Jorge Rodriguez" who had been blamed for "the referendum defeat" the previous December," and changed his tune by promising to "tackle issues like crime and garbage collection that more directly affect his grass roots supporters," adding that "we are not extremists and we cannot be. We have to look for alliances with the middle classes," saying that there were no plans to "eliminate private property" (Frank Jack Daniel, "Venezuela's Chavez reshuffles cabinet after defeat," *Reuters*, Jan 3, 2008). He even, in an act of grace, "declared a pardon that is expected to free from jail hundreds of people who took part in a coup that briefly ousted him from power in 2002"! Still, his strong words and thoughts did not subside. He called on his opponents to read about his political mentors, saying that "to those who consider themselves holier than the Pope, let them read Lenin. They should meet Fidel Castro some day." In January of the same year, after the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) was less than a year old (it has been founded on March 24, 2007) outlined its "Draft Program and Principles," and would later have ranks in the millions of members. Within this, the party said that it will have a unique form of socialism (more accurately social democracy if you look at what is happening in the country) in Venezuela:

> *The Party will go to great efforts to educate itself and others in human experiences that have distant antecedents, such as American Indian cosmovision and primitive Christianity and more recent experiences like those that from the 20th century that gave rise to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. But the socialism of the*

> *21st century will be the consequence of a creative praxis, the free exercise of the will and desires of the Venezuelan people. It will be "neither imitation nor copy", to borrow the expression of José Carlos Mariátegui, but rather a "heroic creation".*

Still, this leaves the door open to learning from the Soviet, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Cuban experiences to say the least. In a different way this was reflected by the Wall Street Journal which declared that Chavez is "an ally of the Iranian mullahs, a supporter of North Korea, a close friend of Fidel Castro and a good customer for Vladimir Putin's weapon factories," to make him sound like a monster, just as they do with any disliked leader who is in the periphery. In September of that year, left-leaning commentator, Michael Albert, asked Julio Chavez, Mayor of Carora, that slogans like "Chavez is the people," "With Chavez anything without Chavez nothing," "Who is against Chavez is against the people"...sounds a little like North Korea" acting like that is bad and engaging in anti-communist dribble. What Julio Chavez said here is worth quoting:

> *"For us President Chavez has broken many paradigms, has broken with many historical trends…at this point in time Chavez is absolutely necessary, cannot be done without, for our revolutionary process….Chavez was a product of various rebellions. He didn't come from nowhere. He is not a Messiah….he resembles the people to such an extent, thinks and acts like the people, and says exactly what he thinks – he is what is needed at this moment. So right now, I think that Chavez is absolutely indispensable. I am one of those who is fighting against the current that argues for Chavismo without Chavez. To the extent that Fidel Castro sees that his time has come to an end, it is now Hugo Chavez's time…Chavez really does embody the personal anguish, the old lack of hope, the new rising hope, and the desires of the people. And that is why we say with him, everything, without him, nothing. At this moment Chavez is the man. He is at the heart of the process unfolding here in Latin America."*

In 2009 there was a victory for the Bolivarian Revolution. It could be said to among the "mass socialist revolutions in China, Indo-China," and the DPRK which "ousted colonial powers and defeated their collaborators in a period of hyper-inflation and mass unemployment," as one commentator put it. This victory was a referendum in February, which ended term limits for the President and all elected officials, was considered "free and fair" by election observers from many countries and a showcase of the clear "popular democracy" in Venezuela ("Chavez wins chance of fresh term," *BBC News*, Feb 16, 2009; Mark Weisbrot, "Venezuela, an imaginary threat," *The Guardian*, Feb 18, 2009 (quotes from Univision interview); Reuters Staff, "Chavez to Obama: I'd vote for you, and you for me," *Reuters*, Sept 30, 2012; Howard LaFranchi, "Is Venezuela's Hugo Chavez sincere in endorsing Obama?," *Christian Science Monitor*, Oct 2, 2012; "Chavez: Obama meddles in Venezuela term-limit vote," *Sioux City Journal* (reprinted from AP), Jan 18, 2009; Tom Phillips, "Hugo Chávez says Obama is 'a clown and an embarrassment'," *The Guardian*, Dec 20, 2011; "Veneconomy: Venezuela Chavez' Doubly Illegal and Unconstitutional Amendment," *Latin American Herald Tribune*, 2009; "U.S. Embassy Head Denies Plotting With Opposition in Venezuela," *Latin American Herald Tribune*, 2009; "US welcomes Venezuela's term vote," *BBC News*, Feb 17, 2009; "Venezuela ousts EU politician for insulting Chavez," *CNN*, Feb 14, 2009). As such, the country's constitution was changed. It was followed by mass celebrations in Caracas and Spanish election observer, favored by the opposition, calling Chavez a "dictator" and was kicked out of the country, just like "Jose Miguel Vivanco, Human Rights Watch executive director for the Americas" in September of the previous year, rightly so! Chavez said that Obama wanted him removed from power: "He's said I'm an obstacle for progress in Latin America. Therefore it must be removed, this obstacle, right?" While AP was befuddled to what he was referring to, he was clearly referencing an interview Obama did with Univision before his inauguration in January, saying that Chavez "impeded progress in the region...[and] exporting terrorist activities." Later on that year, Chavez would give Obama a book by the late Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano titled *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* (*Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina*), which he admitted is "still alive and kicking" but said that his "old writing style seems rather stodgy." Years later, in September 2012, Chavez would sort of "endorse" Obama (which didn't make Obama a socialist no matter what those conservative goofballs would say) saying that "I hope this doesn't harm Obama, but if I was from the United States, I'd vote for Obama...Obama is a good guy...I think that if Obama was from Barlovento or some Caracas neighborhood, he'd vote for Chavez...After our triumph and the supposed, probable triumph of President Obama, with the extreme right defeated here and there, I hope we could start a new period of normal relations with the United States," echoing what he said about him before the 2008 election: that Obama was "an intelligent man." Still, this doesn't take away from being anti-imperialist, but shows that he was clearly interesting in normalizing relations, and attempting to build off Obama not calling Venezuela a security threat, just like Cuba did years later. After all, in December 2011, he called Obama an "embarrassment" and clown" who should "focus on governing your country, which you've turned into a disaster," which is an understandable statement after Obama's aggressive remarks.

In December 2009, Chavez spoke to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, where he again criticized capitalism and imperialism, while also praising Karl Marx:

> *"…What we live on this planet is an imperial dictatorship, and from here we continue to denounce it. Down with the imperial dictatorship! And may the peoples live and democracy and equality on this planet!…There is a*

group of countries that believe themselves superior to us from the south…a ghost runs through Copenhagen, paraphrasing Karl Marx, the great Karl Marx, a ghost walks through the streets of Copenhagen, and I think that ghost walks in silence in this room, there goes, among us, gets through the corridors, it goes out below, up, that ghost is a frightening ghost almost nobody wants to name it: capitalism is the ghost, almost nobody wants to name it…Let's not change the climate. Let's change the system! And consequently we will begin to save the planet. Capitalism, the model of destructive development, is destroying life, threatening to definitively end the human species…The rich are destroying the planet. Could it be that they plan to leave for another when they destroy this one?…The current human activity exceeds the threshold of sustainability, endangering life on the planet, but also in it we are profoundly unequal…the 500 million richest people….seven percent of the world's population…is responsible…are responsible for fifty percent of the polluting emissions, while the poorest 50 percent are responsible for only seven percent of the polluting emissions…60 percent of the planet's ecosystems are damaged, 20 percent of the earth's crust is degraded; we have been impassive witnesses of deforestation, land conversion, desertification, alteration of freshwater systems, overexploitation of marine resources, pollution and loss of biological diversity…Developed countries should establish binding, clear and concrete commitments in the substantial reduction of their emissions and assume obligations of financial and technological assistance to poor countries to face the destructive dangers of climate change…There are some countries that are playing here that there is no document, because they do not want a law, they do not want a rule, because the non-existence of that norm allows them to play their exploitative freedom, their overwhelming freedom…Can a finite earth support an infinite project? The thesis of capitalism, infinite

> *developmentalism is a destructive model, let's accept it…Stop the aggressions and the wars we ask the peoples of the world to the empires, to those who seek to continue dominating the world and exploiting us. No more imperial military bases, no coups d'etat, let's build a fairer and more equitable economic and social order, eradicate poverty, stop immediately the high emission levels, stop environmental deterioration and avoid the great catastrophe of climate change, let's integrate ourselves in the noble objective of being all freer and more supportive…Only possible on the path of socialism, socialism, the other ghost that Karl Marx talked about,…is the course for the salvation of the planet, [and] I do not have the slightest doubt, and capitalism is the path of hell, to the destruction of the world…History calls us to union and struggle. If capitalism resists, we are obliged to fight against capitalism and open the paths of the salvation of the human species…Let's hear Rosa Luxemburg when she said: Socialism or barbarism"*

These words should not surprise anyone at all. I say this because Chavez said the following year, 2010, before the National Assembly that he was a revolutionary and is a "Marxist to the same degree as the followers of the ideas of Jesus Christ and the liberator of America, Simon Bolivar...Who can imagine Christ as a capitalist? Christ was more radical than any of us,'" and said that he had begun studying Marx's *Das Kapital* (*Capital* in English) then saying he hadn't read it completely yet, giving him "the answers to many questions." He also said that "for the love of God, let's halt this [commercialization of Christmas], let's put the brakes on this consumerist, capitalist insanity, that leads us to lose our spiritual values." He also said, in January 2010 that, and I quote, "Marxism is undoubtedly the most advanced theory in the interpretation...[of] the concrete reality of the people," called Christ a "Marxist," and said that it is "necessary to take the oxygen from him the bourgeois state," statements criticized by the bourgeoisie but praised by fellow PSUV members (Yolanda Valery, "El marxismo según Chávez," *BBC Mundo*, 23 enero 2010 (translated into English paragraph by paragraph by Google Translate); "Chávez afirma que es "marxista" pero reconoce que todavía no ha leído "El Capital"," *Noticias 24*, 15 enero 2010 (translated into English by http://www.online-translator.com/), "Chavez se declara marxista," *ABC*, May 5, 2010 (translated into English by http://www.online-translator.com/), "Chávez se declara marxista en un mensaje ante el Congreso," *Clarin Noticas*, Jan 16, 2010 (translated into English by http://www.online-translator.com/). With this, we get to 2010. In July, one Venezuelan official said that "an invasion of Venezuela would be almost "simultaneous with an attack on North Korea or Iran" and that Venezuelans need to start organising and mobilising to defend "the sovereignty of our homeland."" which is not off base at all. Many months later, in November, the Venezuelan government said rightly that the U$ was the aggressor on the Korean Peninsula, which was read aloud by Chavez during a televised meeting of regional vice presidents of the PSUV:

> *"The government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has for some time been warning of a political plan that consists of provoking incidents in the zone around the Korean peninsula…as a strategy for the perpetuation of imperialist military hegemony in the region. For peace-loving countries, it is essential to denounce the pre-meditated action of ultra-right sectors of the United States, which through certain institutions of the country such as the Pentagon, the State Department, and the CIA pursue the objective of creating diverse points of instability on the planet, as part of the necessity of maintaining the functioning of a well-oiled military industrial complex…[we urge] the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, and the countries in the area to strengthen their capacity to understand each other, with the aim of preserving peace in the region."*

This was a more positive statement toward the DPRK than previously, which can be said to be progress without question. 2011 and 2012 were not much different. On June 30 of 2011, Chavez said he was "recovering from an operation to remove an abscess tumor with cancer cells." In September of the same year, the DPRK joined many other countries, including Venezuela, which refused (translated) to recognize the provisional government in Libya, after the imperialist assault, as reported in the publication (Spanish language) of the Venezuelan Communist Party (PCV) (The translated text is here, and the original Spanish language is here). In December 2012, Chavez requested a second medical operation, which he received in Cuba after he had traveled there. This is a show of comradely solidarity that he was treated in a Cuban hospital. Then we get to 2013, a watershed year for relations between the DPRK and Venezuela. Due to Chavez's sickness, his inauguration was delayed but he did return "on February 18, 2013...and was admitted directly to the military hospital in Caracas." Not long after that he sent a letter to the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of South America and Africa (ASA) in Equatorial Guinea, which was read by the Venezuelan Foreign Minister, Elías Jaua. He described the transatlantic slave trade as the "kidnapping and murder of millions of daughters and sons of mother Africa, in order to feed a system of slave exploitation in their colonies, sowed in Our America warrior and combative African blood, which burned by the fire that produces the desire for freedom." However, he said that the sowing of feelings of resistance grew, leading to the "beginning of an independence, unionist, anti-imperialist process and restorer in Latin and Caribbean America" and connected this to "the twentieth century, and the libertarian struggles of Africa," naming Patrice Lumumba and

Amilcar Cabral as two liberation leaders in Africa. He went on to say that since "Latin America and the Caribbean, together with Africa share a past of oppression and slavery...we are also united by a present of unrenounceable struggle for the freedom and definitive independence of our nations...we are the same people" and called for ending "neoliberal capitalism of the twentieth century." Adding to this, he further called for "South – South cooperation" with "strategies and plans of sustainable development towards the south towards our peoples," noting that some Western powers "project a neocolonial policy that threatens the stability that we have begun to strengthen in our continents," adding that "the neocolonial strategy has been...to divide the most vulnerable nations of the world, in order to subject them to a slavish relationship of dependency." With that he strongly opposed the "foreign military intervention in Libya...[and] absolute rejection of all NATO interventionist activity," ending by saying "Let us march towards our union and definitive independence...Long live the South American and African Union! Long live the ASA! Ever onward to victory! We will live and we will win!" Sadly, at 4:25 PM on March 5, at the age of 58, Chavez, who said he would dedicate his whole life to revolution, died in Caracas. The Bolivarian Revolution was to go on without him, facing trials and tribulations in the days ahead.

In March of the same year, Alejandro Cao de Benós, ambassador of the DPRK in Chile was interviewed by the Chilean Communist Party (Proletarian Action) PC (AP) which was transcribed by the Popular Tribune, a publication of the PCV, adding important insights on the DPRK itself. Cao de Benós, of Spanish descent, said that (The Spanish language transcription in the *Popular Tribune* is here, and the translated version of the text is here):

> *I have never been able to tolerate that 80% of humanity lives in absolute poverty while a few enslave the rest, accumulate millions and speculate with the price of wheat or rice…I dedicate[d] myself to fight for socialism when I realize that volunteering or charity is not going to save the people…It is complicated to summarize it in a few words, but it [the DPRK] is a socialist system where all the means of production and property belong to the people. There are no private companies or speculation. The Government provides completely free housing for each citizen, as well as education and health at no cost…There is a public distribution system that guarantees food and basic resources to all citizens equally and without exception. The union of the people, army and party is complete, there are no factionalisms or place for selfishness, popular conscience and the strong union around our leaders make the DPR of Korea an impregnable fortress…Despite the global crisis, as the DPRK*

maintains an independent and self-sustaining system, the economy improves at a rate of 10% per year. 100,000 new fully modern homes are being completed and will be delivered this April…The main key [to solve varied social problems] lies in the nationalization, but this can not be carried out if there is no charismatic leader with massive popular support and a military force. By nationalizing the companies the people take control of the resources, in this way the money that was previously taken by the foreign entrepreneurs or holdings is then within the country. Logically this process can not be carried out without a great popular support that must have a visible and unifying head…Our position is always dialogue and mutual respect, but as we always say: The DPR of Korea wants peace, but will not kneel for it. Meaning that the nation is ready for both dialogue and war…I spend a lot of time traveling and every time I come back from Korea I see that the international situation is going to get worse, especially capitalism, moved by the insatiable desire of the big corporations, it collapses..I have seen a great change from the 90s to the current ones. At that time communism was demonized and the weak changed sides quickly…There is a certain 'taboo' in communist organizations to have a leader, that translates into an internal weakness that disperses the forces and favors the enemy…The Juche Idea expresses that man is master of his destiny and can use the means at his disposal to modify it. It's basically Korean-style socialism. Although in its origins it owes Marxism-Leninism, it is an original idea created by the Great Leader Kim Il Sung and that incorporates traditional elements of Korean culture and philosophy…The giant portraits of Marx and Lenin remain in the main square, each day facing the portrait of our President Kim Il Sung. And Iosif Stalin was a good comrade of the Great Leader, to whom he gave an armored car and train…[the DPRK's short term goals are to] improve the economy, specifically developing light industry. Once Korea is strong politically and *militarily resources are being used to improve the life of the people and modernize the industry.*

The same month, Nicolas Maduro, now heading the country after Chavez's death, said that Venezuela is committed to all efforts to achieve a peaceful solution in the Korean Peninsula, saying that they hope "for peace on the Korean peninsula and...[calling] to diminish the statements and militaristic actions, which could lead to both Nations to a new conflict. In addition, the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela expresses its deep concern for the continuous realization of exercises and military tests, which only contribute to the increase of tensions. The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates the bonds of friendship with both Nations, and reaffirms its commitment to all efforts that allow to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict" (The translated text is here and the Spanish language original is here. For the next sentence see: María Gabriela Díaz, "North Korean Embassy in Venezuela Signals Two Peas in a Pod," *PanAM Post*, Jun 26, 2014. For the next sentence, after that, the translated text is here and the Spanish language original is here). Even with this, the next month, after Maduro won elections in April 2013, Kim Yong-nam, chairperson of the SPA Presidium said that the victory in Venezuela of Maduro was "an expression of the deep trust and expectations on his shoulders," and congratulated the Venezuelan people for a "firm will to maintain the road towards socialism." Later on that year, at the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students (FMJE), in which there was "discussion around the unity of action of the progressive youth and student movement, in support of the struggles of the peoples in the face of imperialist aggressions" there were delegations from "Zimbabwe...Angola...Vietnam, Nepal and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," to name a few. Also in 2013, the ambassador of the DPRK to Cuba, Jon Yong Jin, visited Venezuela, meeting with two parliamentarians, one from the PCV, another from the PSUV. At the meeting, Jin said that the DPRK offered "unrestricted support and solidarity" to Venezuela, saying that their government would not "hesitate to join the struggle against the empire to defend sovereignty and the Bolivarian Revolution." On an even more powerful note, Jin supported the decision by Maduro to "expel from Venezuelan territory the three diplomatic officials who conspired against the nation," saying that this was "a measure of an independent country and we support it," adding that giving priority to military affairs is important, saying that the "driving force" of the DPRK "is in the popular masses," noting that the nuclear weapons are for self-defense only and to stop imperial aggression: "the Supreme Commander of the People's Army, Kim Jong-un, has affirmed that if a single American bullet falls on our territory, we will launch a missile towards the island of Guam and another directed at the White House." Beyond this, he also said that "unity of the revolutionary force is important in that fight against imperialism." the PCV deputy thanked Jin for "the support and solidarity offered by the head of the mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" and added that the "National Assembly has been developing the legal context to deepen relations between the two countries" while the PSUV deputy said that "a friendship group with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is [being] formed" in the National Assembly!

2014, like 2013, was another year of strengthened relations between the two countries. With the "Western" left, as you could call them, saying that "Venezuela would be like...North Korea," in a negative way, they fail to recognize the connection between the two countries. In

June of that year, it was clear that the DPRK was ready to open an embassy in Venezuela after the Venezuelan government gave its stamp of approval, ending the ambassador to Cuba representing "North Korean interests in Venezuela" (JC Finley, "North Korea to open embassy in Venezuela," *UPI*, Jun 25, 2014; María Gabriela Díaz, "North Korean Embassy in Venezuela Signals Two Peas in a Pod," *PanAM Post*, Jun 26, 2014). One bourgeois analyst noted rightly that "North Korean presence in the region has gone under the radar up until now" with their admiration for "Hugo Chávez's 21st Century Socialism," adding that Jin, at the meeting previously mentioned "took the opportunity to express his support for President Nicolás Maduro," and noting by January 2014, "Yul Jabour and...Julio Chávez, emphasized the need for study of the *Juche* doctrine and its application in Venezuela's territory." This same analyst noted that while "there are 24 countries in the Americas and the Caribbean that maintain relations with North Korea...only four of them have Embassies" with Venezuela being the fifth country to join this list, as they also worried that "*Chavismo* could adopt North Korea's ideological and political features," although this has not happened, showing how absurd their fears are.

Venezuela's connection with the DPRK is understandable. As one analysis in August of 2014 noted correctly, "the attempts of Vietnam, Korea, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Grenada, Nicaragua, Libya and other countries to forge an independent path have been answered with all-out imperialist war" meaning that survive "in such a hostile world, there are only two real choices: capitulate, or unite and fight," which Chavez choosing, "informed by his rich knowledge of world history, his identification of US-led imperialism as the major obstacle to peace and development, and his own experiences of trying to exercise sovereignty," to unite and fight, building "Venezuelan socialism in the face of destabilisation and CIA-backed coup attempts." The Venezuelan communists started that process however, with the founding of a communist youth organization in 1944 in the country (The Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here). Also in 2014, in August, the DPRK, along with Venezuela and many others said no to the commercial blockade on Venezuela imposed by the U$ imperialists. In 2015, the embassy of the DPRK opened in Venezuela. Sadly, I cannot, currently find any photographs of it, but it undoubtedly there. In February of that year, the *Popular Tribune*, a publication of the PCV, published an article noting that "only the Democratic Republic of Korea uses atomic deterrence as a factor that has prevented imperialism from taking control of the strategic peninsula of south-west Asia," saying this in a supportive manner (For the sentence the footnote is on, the Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here. For the next sentence, the translated version is here, and the Spanish language version is here). The following month, in the same publication, it was noted that the executive decision to make Venezuela an "an extraordinary and unusual threat for national security and the foreign policy of the United States" and declare a "state of emergency" was "applied for the first time against Korea," then followed by by "Yugoslavia...Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, Iraq or the tiny island of Granada," and now was being applied to Venezuela! The same month, there were two more articles noting the DPRK. The first was from the Bolivarian Front of Scientific Researchers, Innovators and Workers (FREBIN). In their statement to those in the U$, they noted that "Venezuela appears next to China, North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Russia... Please, give me a break!" and that in "one of the strategic missions, the NSA proposes "providing warning of impending state instability" in countries such as North Korea, Cuba, Nigeria, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Bolivia, Sudan, Kosovo, Venezuela, the "Palestinian Authority "and -attention!- something they call "Latin American

Bolivarian developments”.” They added that this means that “Venezuela appears as an unusual and extraordinary threat because it presents an ideology -the Boliviarian one- which rivals and contrasts with the totalitarian influence exerted by the US status quo over the Latin American region in the recent decades.” This is part of the reason the Koreans support the Venezuelans. As one critical article said at the time, “to say “Venezuela” in the same breath as “North Korea” is entirely acceptable to most people, including much of the left,” referring to the fact that many of those on the Left see this as negative rather than seeing the two countries as comrades-in-arms.

In October, the *Popular Tribune* publication of the PCV published something which was from the embassy of the DPRK in Venezuela, focusing on the Workers’ Party of Korea, which they called the “Korean Labor Party” (The Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here). They defined the Juche idea as meaning that “the masses of the revolution and their construction are the masses of the people and the force that drives them also” and Songun as meaning “prioritizing military affairs and taking the armed forces by force to promote the revolution and its construction,” noting they came about first in June 1930 from Kim Il Sung himself. They added that as the years went on, the WPK became

> *more powerful as an ideologically pure organization, fully impregnated only by the Juche idea and the Songun, and that even in the face of the vicissitudes of all sorts of history invariably maintains its principle…The first aspect worth mentioning of the Korean Labor Party is iron unity and internal cohesion…Kim Jong Il…made each one of the lines and policies outlined to reflect the aspiration and the demand of the masses to the maximum, and launched slogans such as “All the Party, to get along with the masses!” And “Serve the people!” that all the party cadres will always empathize with the masses and serve them faithfully…Kim Jong Un…who carries out without any deviation the ideology and the cause of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, launched as the slogan of the Party “Everything for the people, all leaning in the popular masses! “, and fully practice the policy of love and appreciation to the people…A party like the [WPK]…is*

> *always invincible; This is the truth proven by history. That's why the [WPK]…will be eternally triumphant.*

In 2016, connections between the DPRK and Venezuela were still strong. That year, according to some sources, exports to Venezuela were "$7.6 million, while Venezuela's exports to North Korea were minimal," showing that Koreans were helping Venezuelans build their Bolivarian Revolution. In February of that year, Han Song Guk, Adviser Consul of embassy of the DPRK commemorated the life of Kim Jong Il, calling him an "unforgettable leader who devoted his whole life to the enrichment and prosperity of the country" who led the country through "terrible difficulties due to the concentrated offensive of imperialism and its allies against socialist Korea...and unprecedented natural calamities" and destined "the valuable fund of the state that was almost total of the country's wealth...for the introduction of the computerized numerical control technology in the machinery industry" (The Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here). Guk also said that "his best option to prepare the people for the eternal comfort and self-sufficiency of everything necessary instead of buying in international markets" while the DPRK moved forward, "overcoming the unprecedented adversities that caused the whole world concerns about its destiny" and Kim Jong Il had a goal to "sacrifice himself for the enrichment and prosperity of the country and the happiness of the people." This is why, Guk concludes, he will "live eternally in the hearts of Koreans and progressive peoples of the world." The following month, the PCV's Political Bureau "expressed its solidarity with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the face of the aggression that is home to US imperialism, South Korea and Japan," which is what all progressive peoples should do without question (The Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here). This comradely solidarity remained strong with reason. Also that month, the PCV delivered a message of solidarity to the government of the DPRK, reaffirming the "rights of the people to defend themselves against this aggression" and adding that "the DPRK since its independence has been suffering the aggression of the imperialist power." This is undeniably true if you know the history of the DPRK.

In the later months of 2016, the connection of the two countries was evident in the distorted eyes of bourgeois analysts who snarled. As one analysis put it, "Venezuela has become one of *those* countries...that western audiences have an insatiable interest in, but where credible information can be hard to come across," which is the same for the DPRK, which Max Fisher of the *Washington Post* paraphrased a fellow reporter Isaac Stone Fish as once joking, "as an American journalist you can write almost anything you want about North Korea and people will just accept it. Call it the Stone Fish Theory of North Korea coverage." This isn't really a joke, but a reality as anything they want is said about the DPRK and its kind of disgusting to say the least. In October, Venezuela joined a host of other nations, such as Vietnam, Laos, Angola, Bolivia, and the DPRK, to name a few, who called for the "end of the Washington sanctions against Cuba" (The Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here). The following month, one of the biggest newspapers in Venezuela (*Ultimas Noticas*), undoubtedly favoring the opposition, ran an op-ed by Gloria Cuenca asking "is this government trying to imitate North Korea?," again trying to stir the pot of deceit. The same month, after Fidel Castro's death, Nicholas Maduro joined other world leaders in Havana's Plaza of the Revolution, underscoring the importance of Cuba to the Bolivarian Revolution:

"without the support of the Cuban Revolution and its example of struggle and immense capacity for solidarity, our path would have been much harder, our young revolution advancing much slower." Maduro was joined by delegations from many countries paying tribute to Fidel, from "Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Greece, Russia, China, Vietnam, South Africa, Namibia, Algeria, [and] Iran," and in some sense by those who declared "official state commemorations of Castro's legacy, including Nicaragua, Bolivia, Algeria, Vietnam, North Korea, [and] Namibia." Again, Venezuela and the DPRK were part of the same anti-imperialist front.

In 2017, the DPRK and Venezuela were still interconnected by their relations. In January, Cho Chol Hui, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs for the DPRK made a visit to the Venezuelan embassy in revisionist China so he could present "the balance of the newly completed year 2016 and 2017 prospects, offered by the President, Kim Jong Un" (The Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here). At this meeting, which was held with the Venezuelan ambassador there, Iván Zerpa Guerrero, both of these individuals "ratified the bonds of solidarity and friendship that unite the two Nations," with Choe saying that their government and the Korean people will support Venezuela with common positions between the two in international forums. Choe also noted his "country's achievements in economic matters, establishing numerous industrial developments, and cooperative farms, which have generated a bumper increase in the levels of production," adding that "his country's Government will propose is to accelerate the victorious advance of socialism" with measures to "promote the industry of construction, light industry, agriculture and fishing." In terms of foreign policy, the country would "promote peace in the Korea Peninsula, in search of the reunification of that nation" and would continue to denounce political and military pressures "to achieve sanctions against [them, which had] have reached extreme levels, but have failed in order to break the conviction of its people and its leader...and could not prevent the advance of socialist Kore." He finally added that their government and WPK were committed to a "foreign policy of independence, peace and friendship, expanding and developing the relations of good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation...making joint efforts with them to ensure genuine international justice." In response, Ambassador Iván Zerpa greeted the DPRK, ratifying "the deepest feelings of friendship and cooperation between the two countries, in the framework [of the] Bolivarian diplomacy of peace, in defense of the sovereignty and independence of countries."

After January, the two countries continued to build their ties. In February, the government of the DPRK worked to evaluate a "number of agro-industrial projects to develop the potentials of the State Yaracuy," with Ri Sung Gil, Ambassador of the former country in Venezuela, meeting with the Legislative Council to explore "investment opportunities and promote sustainable projects in the agricultural area" (The Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here). Specifically, he was quoted as saying that "we are reviewing agreements in all areas to strengthen the bonds of cooperation and friendship that keep our countries and here in Yaracuy, we see significant potential that we want to develop agribusiness, to boost...corn [fields]...[which is] of great interest for our nation and that unites us in the production area." After saying that the Koreans supported "the policies pushed by President Nicolas Maduro," he said that his government supported a dialogue between the government and opposition leaders to "achieve peace and stability political and economic in Venezuela." He was quoted as saying "the dialogue is correct to stabilize the political situation...North Korea has always maintained the rejection against external interference in the internal affairs of this Latin American country." In response, one of the members of the Legislative Council, Chairman Henrys Lord Mogollon added that cooperation would expand in the future: "We have planned other meetings, more technical, in that North Korea will assess with greater depth in what areas can get involved to promote viable projects that contribute to the mutual support that we promote both countries...everything [is] geared to agribusiness with products such as corn, sugar cane[,] and orange[s], [all of]...which Yaracuy has great potential."

In later months, the connection between the two countries was even clearer. After all, both countries have been painted in a bleak manner by the bourgeois media, which engages in "starvation propaganda" which is like "war propaganda" since it is meant "to paint a false but compelling picture to influence the gullible and justify military aggression disguised as humanitarian rescue." In June, Kim Yong Nam, President of the SPA Presidium, sent a letter to Maduro, the secretary-general (or what some call "President") of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which has 120 member countries, focusing on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, adding that climate change is a global issue and an urgent task, saying that "U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement...is an extreme expression of egoism and moral inferiority seeking after its own well-being only at the cost of the global interests," further noting that as "the world['s] second largest greenhouse gas emitting state, the United States is more responsible than any other countries for the prevention of the global warming." Nam added that not only is this a "self-righteous and selfish action" but that the NAM should "duly take concerted measures to resolutely condemn and reject the arrogant and shameless action of the United States which pursues its own interests at the expense of developing countries." At the end of this message, Nam said that he reaffirms "the stand of the DPRK to strengthen close cooperation with Venezuela and other member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement in upholding the purposes and principles of NAM and enhancing its role." From June of that year, until 2019, when the next summit of the NAM will be held in Azerbaijan, the member countries of NAM entrusted "Venezuela with the leadership of the body...in order to encourage actions necessary for reinforcing the founding principles of the bloc" with Maduro as the President of this supranational organization. The same month, Ri Yong Ho, the foreign minister of the DPRK, sent a "congratulatory message to Samuel Moncada upon his appointment as foreign minister of People's Power of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela." He extended full "support and solidarity to the righteous struggle of the Venezuelan government and people to defend the Bolivarian revolution and accomplish the cause of ex-President Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias, vehemently denouncing the U.S. and its vassal forces' evermore undisguised moves to interfere in the internal affairs of the country," and wished Moncada "successes in his new job, expressing belief that the two countries will continue to strengthen support and cooperation with each other in the international arena" with stronger relations "in the common struggle for socialism against imperialism." Also that month, Ri Sung Gil, Ambassador of the DPRK in Venezuela, highlighted "the heroic history of struggle and combativity of the North Korean people against imperialism" and referred to "the tension that remains in the Korean peninsula in the face of the military provocations of the United States and South Korea," adding that "the North Korean people are prepared to wage an offensive against the imperialist aggressors (The Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here). This contrasted with what Jorge 'Tuto' Quiroga, a reactionary President of Bolivia from 2001 to 2002 who is a capitalist propagandist and former consultant of the IMF and World Bank, who declared in the *Huffington Post* that "Venezuela is at the crossroads: the beginning of the end of this narco-dictatorship or the beginning of a North Korea in the Caribbean." Elsewhere he declared that the election of Maduro "will install a Soviet state in Venezuela, liquidate democracy, end the Congress, cancel elections and turn Venezuela into a sort of Caribbean 'North Korea.'" These were and are absurd notions without question and it shows how these bourgeois analysts, like always, don't really understand what is going on in Venezuela. But what's new about that? That has been the main perception for years with "enemy" countries.

In the next month, July, again, people were comparing Venezuela to the DPRK. Quiroga was saying that Venezuela under Maduro was "the next North Korea," while Jazz Shaw of *Hot Air* thundered, after citing, other than the one link to another article he wrote, exclusively bourgeois media (*NBC*, *CNN*, and *Reuters* (two times)) that "...Venezuela will likely become a hermit kingdom, much in the style of either Fidel Castro's Cuba during the early years or North Korea's present regime." Again, these bourgeois individuals fear something which hasn't even happened, showing they are so deluded, its almost a little funny. The month afterwords, August, some admitted that even "the most ardent Maduro supporter is unlikely to use Kim Jong-un as a model" (Oliver Stuekel, "Why Venezuela will not look like Cuba (or North Korea)," Post-Western World, Aug 11, 2017. In the next sentence, the Spanish language version of this article is here, and the translated version is here). The same month, Pedro Eusse, representing the PCV's Political Bureau, said that the party condemns "the aggressive [and] militaristic...action of the right to self-determination of the peoples manifested by the United States, by US and European imperialism, who hold a global monopoly over nuclear weapons," adding that the "threat to humanity is not Korea, it is not China, it is not even Russia, it is the imperialist world system, while that exists, we are threatened all of us." As the DPRK foreign ministry added, in a similar manner, "China and Venezuela are...showing strong reaction to the escalating threats of sanctions by the U.S." Also that month, Ri Yong Ho sent a "congratulatory message to Jorge Alberto Arreaza Montserrat on his appointment as foreign minister of the People's Power of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela,' extending "full support and solidarity to the just struggle of the government and people of Venezuela to reject the U.S. and its vassal forces' interference, achieve the country's peace and political stability and realize the cause of Hugo Chavez Frias. Like Ho had expressed the previous month, he again expressed "the belief that the relations of friendship and cooperation between the governments and peoples of the two countries would grow stronger in the common struggle for independence and socialism against imperialism."

In the later months of 2017, September, October, November, and December, relations were clearly still strong. The DPRK embassy in Venezuela, on the 69th Anniversary of the founding of the DPRK, laid a "wreath before the Mausoleum of the Liberator, Simón Bolívar," with the delegation of the embassy headed by Ri Sung Gil and by Gloria Román Romero, "General Director of the Office of the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asia, the Middle East and Oceania," of the Venezuelan government. During their joint activity together, the "notes of the national anthems of both countries were performed by the Marcial Band of the Military Academy of the Bolivarian National Guard" while residents and friends of the Korean population attended the event" (Donna Borak, "Tax reform, North Korea top U.S. agenda at IMF/World Bank meetings," *CNN*, Oct 12, 2017; Sabrina Martin, "Venezuela Looks to Save Its Economy By Mimicking Communist Ally North Korea," *PanAm Post*, Nov 30, 2017. This paragraph also uses articles from Spanish language sources (here, here, here, and here) which have been translated (here, here, here, and here)). Such solidarity contrasted the actions of U$ imperialism, in October, against Venezuela barring "banks from buying Venezuelan state bonds," which had, as Maduro put it, "exacerbated the crisis." The next month, November, Venezuela raised its voice at the 36th meeting of members to the Organization of the UN in Geneva, for their "right to sovereignty, respect for their right to self-determination and peace against the war media coming from abroad, and the economic blockade by Governments such as the U.S. attempts," with delegations from 25 other countries which also met there including "Sudan, Iran, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Laos, among others," with revisionist China, Nicaragua, and Cuba all supporting Venezuela. Near the end of November there was a momentous meeting between representations of the Central Bank of Venezuela (BCV) and the DPRK to exchange "ideas in the defense and construction of socialism"! For one, José Salamat Khan Fernández of the BCV said that "we must learn from the socio-productive experience of North Korea. We as a people can begin a process of training to reindustrialize the country's economy and depend less and less on other hegemonic countries. We have the human resource, the land and the capital," at a meeting organized by the Movement of Workers and Revolutionary Workers of the BCV (Mttrbcv) which held a discussion titled "The US Blockade of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." In response, Ri Sung Hil said that "expansionist interests [aim] to appropriate the wealth of strategic countries such as Venezuela and North Korea, which chose socialism as an economic and social model. Imperialism wants to keep at bay the economic and military growth of the progressive countries. Venezuela has its geopolitical importance, raw materials, many natural resources, oil and water; The US is not going to leave Venezuela in peace until it seizes the country's resources." A press release released by the BCV gave further context to this meeting:

> *The Movement of Workers and Revolutionary Workers of the Central Bank of Venezuela (Mttrbcv), organized this Wednesday, November 29, the conversation entitled The Blockade of the United States to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in the Auction Room of the Financial Tower of the Institute. The activity, led by the ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ri Sung Gil, was headed by the director and second vice president of the BCV, José Salamat Khan Fernández; the adviser, Simón Escalona and the vice minister of Industrial Management of the Ministry of Popular Power for Basic, Strategic and Socialist Industries, Orlando Ortegano. After the conversation, Ambassador Ri Sung Gil met with the president of the BCV, Ramón Lobo, with whom he talked about the importance of both nations exchanging their experiences in defense of the construction of socialism. This initiative was carried out in order to highlight the North Korean experience in its process of*

self-determination and political, economic and social sovereignty, in the face of the military and interventionist threat of hegemonic countries such as the United States…For his part, the North Korean ambassador, Ri Sung Gil, explained that the US government has expansionist interests to appropriate the wealth of strategic countries such as Venezuela and North Korea, which chose socialism as an economic and social model. "Socialism always has its enemies, because it does not defend the interests of the rich and the influential, who are the minority in the world. Imperialism wants to keep at bay the economic and military growth of the progressive countries….Sung Gil recalled that, like Venezuela, his country has been subject to sanctions and economic blocking measures. Nevertheless, despite the strategy to isolate them, they set out to industrialize the nation and in fourteen years they were able to achieve it…The discussion was carried out as an initiative of Mttrbcv to learn more about the North Korean experience. It also aims to unify efforts between Venezuela and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in the search for strategic alliances that promote the Venezuelan economy, as well as the construction of a socio-productive model based on sovereignty, self-determination, solidarity and cooperation between the villages. Finally, the high representative of the North Korean Government undertook to organize an exhibition with images and videos for the workers of the BCV and in this way to present essential and characteristic aspects of the culture, art and daily life of a society that has been so demonized by the Western media."

This shows that the two countries are coming closer together while the DPRK uses statements at the NAM summit in September 2016, in Venezuela, to note that "the heads of states and governments reaffirmed their commitment to defend the interests of developing countries in the issues directly related to world peace and security such as the situation in the Middle East including the question of Palestine by promoting multilateralism especially by strengthening key role of the United Nations." The two countries are seen as peas in a pod together, more "rogue states" by U$ imperialism. This was evident by the fact that the Heritage Foundation, in their "Index of Economic Freedom" for 2017, released in early this year, 2018, those in the lowest ranks were "Eritrea, the Republic of Congo, Cuba, Venezuela and North Korea," showing the disdain of the bourgeoisie for these countries (Michael W. Chapman, "Ranked Worst for Economic Freedom: North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, Congo, Eritrea, Zimbabwe," *CNSNews.com*, Jan 12, 2018. In this paragraph, articles from a Spanish language source, which has been translated, is used). This connects to the fact that U$ imperial policy toward Venezuela is premised on varied misconceptions, one of which is that "Venezuela is a totalitarian dictatorship." One bourgeois analyst, who hated Maduro, snarled that "while Maduro has certainly done many things to undermine democracy, Venezuela is no North Korea," which is undeniably accurate. In January, Ri Sung Gil visited the Barquisimeto, the capital of music in Venezuela, a city which is 357 kilometers (about 222 miles) from Caracas, and showed his "extensive knowledge of our culture, especially in the Spanish language." On this goodwill visit (Spanish language), hosted in a "downtown hotel facing the permanent book fair," he aimed to embrace "popular movements in the region...pay tribute to the leader, Kim Jong-il" and spoke (translation) to the participants there, adding the following:

> *…invasions and criminal shelling of [U$] imperialism…are intended to continue…We are prepared to defend until the last inhabitant of the country. We are a sovereign country of East Asia, whose portion of land bounded on the North by China and Russia, to the West with the sea of the Japan, or Yellow Sea, to the East by the Gulf of Korea and on the South by South Korea. [Juche] Korea…[with its] capital, Pyongyang, [a] promising city, where the developments cover the entire nation…has currently advance[d]…based on the architectural contents of the creators of the new nation…our country has important achievements of high levels in: education, primary, secondary, University, technology tip, safety, health, management of waters in all respects accurate to our needs, employment suitable to their fellow citizens, stimuli in the fields of mass screening, especially for nuclear power, where [we are working on]…vital fronts for the collective…[helping] workers and young people…Workers, artisans, farmers, artists, children, women are of special primary interest…we enter*

> *into the 21st century with the conviction to uphold the nation, respecting all people who do the same exercise. We now belong to the Atomic club, we can talk about you to you, with its due respect. We are in favour of peace in its maximum expression. Solidarity with peoples in development, we have policies to our principles and purposes, such as the Juche idea, the Juche idea, it is not Marxism-Leninism adapted to Korean reality, but a new ideology, higher to Marxism itself. It is the scientific socialism raised to the exponent.*

At the end of his remarks, he gave a "revolutionary and solidarity greeting...to Venezuela" and "Latin American singer-songwriter, Toño Rivero" played a sound which had premiered in the 1980s in Pyongyang. Again, the connection between the two countries was strong without question. This also shows that Juche is descended from Marxism-Leninism and is its own ideology. In February, some noted that in his State of the Union address, the orange menace had "reinvented its own axis of evil, as a drag brought on by the worst Bushian policy," putting "Russia, China, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Venezuela and Cuba" as part of this "evil" club. This showed, as one remarked, that "there is only one point in the empire that we can endanger: "its values", with the powerful weapon of our own, a crucible of all the values of humanism, hope and example spread throughout a continent and beyond, and a purpose of justice and justice. freedom for all" ("Diosdado Cabello met with Ambassador of Korea of the North in Caracas," *El Nacional* (translated), Feb 1, 2018; KCNA, "Blessings sent to Venezuelan Party," *Pyongyang Times*, Mar 10, 2018; "North Korea supports Venezuela in its anti-imperialist struggle," *khabarkhat News Aggregator Agency*, Mar 11 2018. In this paragraph, articles from a Spanish language source, which has been translated, is used). The same month, Diosdado Cabello, first Vice President of PSUV showed that he met with Ri Sung Gil of the DPRK, saying on twitter that "today together with his Excellency Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ri Sung Gil, deepening relations of friendship," he wrote in his Twitter account." This was corroborated by the DPRK foreign ministry, which said that Kim Jong Il was "awarded a diploma" by the PSUV, which "was conveyed on Feb. 14 to the DPRK ambassador to Venezuela by Felix Jesus Velasquez Castillo, general coordinator of the Federal Political Secretariat of the Party." The following month, the WPK's central committee sent a "congratulatory message" to the PSUV's national leadership "upon the 10th anniversary of its foundation," saying that they "extended warm congratulations and greetings to the Venezuelan Party leadership and all its members and voiced full support and solidarity to the Party in its effort to defend the country's sovereignty and socio-political stability under the banner of the Bolivarian Revolution." They added, in their message that "the ties between the two parties would be strengthened further in the joint struggle for independence, anti-imperialism, and socialism, it wished the Venezuelan Party greater success in its activities."

In the years to come the Bolivarian Revolution has faced many challenges. There has been increased criticism of *TeleSUR English*, an offshoot of the 24 hour news channel, *TeleSUR*, established on June 24, 2005, the 222nd birthday of Simon Bolivar, by Hugo Chavez in service of the "Bolivarian project" which was a collaborative effort of varied governments (Cuba, Argentina, Venezuela, and Uruguay, with Bolivia and Ecuador joining later, and Argentina leaving in 2016). The anti-revolutionary trashheap called *Jacobin*, which claims to be socialist but is actually a bunch of bourgeois posers who kiss up to horrid social democratic imperialists like Bernie Sanders, started this in May 2017, declaring that that *TeleSur* was right to point out that "large television and media conglomerates [in the region] nearly all had ties to the Right," but grumbled that socialism was not being "well served" by the channel (Patrick Iber, "The South Is Our North," *Jacobin*, May 2017). To bolster their argument, the writer, Patrick Iber, cited a number of anti-Venezuela bourgeois scholars: Robert Samet (a person who has focused on the U$-backed opposition and grumbles about "restricted" press freedom in Venezuela), Hugo Pérez Hernáiz (who grumbled about "conspiracy theories" of those support the Bolivarian Revolution), and Alejandro Velasco (an annoying progressive who dislikes the country). With this, its no surprise he claims that the channel doesn't have "editorial independence from the state." His scholarship is questionable. Even with this, he is cited supportively by Jon Jeter in Mint Press News who tells about the story of "Rita Anaya...a 25-year-old graduate student living in southern California," his story, the experience of a "young black woman who once worked as an editor at teleSUR...young woman who worked as the social media editor...young man of Mexican ancestry...[and] black woman from Washington, D.C., who had worked for teleSUR." This adds up to only six people, from an organization which has a staff of up to 200 employees. In this same article, Jeter declares that "TeleSUR English is located in Quito's toniest neighborhood and resembles an insurance office. [and that] its reporters seldom venture outside, conduct phone interviews, or even discuss news stories at length...They are, for the most part, not reporters at all, but aggregators, rewriting news stories published elsewhere." He then calls it an "abysmal failure, and represents nothing less than a betrayal of the Bolivarian revolution" and says, almost hilariously, at the end that, "fearing that I would do time in an Ecuadorian jail if I saw Cyril or Pablo, I quit an hour later, and walked off the job." To support his claims that the news channel is, as he puts it, "by any critical measure — the size of its audience, the impact of its journalism, or its strengthening of democracy — an abysmal failure, and represents nothing less than a betrayal of the Bolivarian revolution," he cites: the horrid Jacobin article I noted earlier, a *Reuters* article in January of this year declaring that "mobs gathered outside some Caracas supermarkets on Saturday after the government ordered shops to slash prices, creating chaos as desperate Venezuelans leapt at the chance to buy cheaper food as the country's worsening economy causes severe shortages" of questionable veracity, and an article by a man named Ariel Sheen. Again, this is basically an attack piece. Sure, some comments on Glassdoor are negative with some saying that "HR is rude and unhelpful...[has a] Hard Left Ideology which makes very difficult to make real news...Upper management very controlling...Leftist slant on everything skews the truth sometimes...There is little room for growth, unless you start from the bottom...Poor quality control in all areas...Organisation doesn't have good long-term vision," there are also positives as stated on there:

Good Salary and benefits…Important message, great experience, fun team, based in Quito, great pay…Salary goes very far in Ecuador…Meet people from all over the West…Great stepping stone…Opportunity to write numerous kinds of news articles such as briefs, opinion and analysis pieces. I have also interviewed a number of people…The salaries offered by teleSUR English are usually sufficient to live a very good life. Colleagues are from around the world and very talented. Great place to learn, get experience…Good wages in a cheap country…Maybe your best opportunity to break into journalism…Management is pleasant and helpful…Colleagues are diverse, young and interesting

Ariel Sheen, in his article on TeleSur English (began in 2014), starts out by saying that they are "unique in today's media environment...TeleSur English is avowedly socialist in its political orientation...the non-current event content shared on their social media pages includes quotes and photos from socialists...and a variety of other socialist related content" (Ariel Sheen, "TeleSUR English: Surface Level Website Analysis," Feb 13, 2018). Sheen, unlike the other two claims he favors them and is just trying to air "helpful" criticism. He claimed that looking at their digital performance "something more nefarious emerged" and is surprised that when he sent his negative findings there he didn't hear from them again, not realizing that they may have rejected what he said because it seemed he was attacking the organization from the outside. He then declares that what he "uncovered at TeleSur English what looks to be corruption and gross incompetence, if not sabotage," saying that the "bad stats were intentionally produced as the person directing operations was either incompetent or is trying to purposely sabotage TeleSUR English's operations," adding that the social media footprint of *TeleSur English* has "the shape of such mismanagement." To support these high and mighty claims, he claimed that "many of the people which are "Following" these accounts" on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are not real, but admitted he was only estimating how many were "fake," with Twitter Audit saying the 80% of the followers on twitter were real. This is where his analysis gets a bit shaky, as he seems to not recognize some people may interact with this social media more than others, and declares that the channel is "paying for fake followers" which is an assertion he cannot support, and complains that they didn't tell him that "the unpublishing of the TeleSUR English Facebook page was an accident on their part,"only hearing of it from internal sources, like his opinion matters more than others!

Clearly, Mr. Sheen is an egotist without question. While he makes good suggestions on interacting with readers and perhaps may have some points about bad social engagement by TeleSUR English, or even that there should be writers' guidelines, perhaps he should work with them to help them solve these problems rather than grumbling about it! If they need this help, they provide it them rather than complaining it isn't being done! Worst of all, he cites anti-socialist Frederich Hayek to "take down" the channel, claiming that TeleSUR English (and TeleSUR) is that "the tendency for innovation to be lost in production," going on to engage in "total conjecture" (in his own words) and received information from an unnamed source on the "insulting, overbearing demeanor" of the head of the organization. He then declares that the organization "replicates an elitest strand of authoritarian socialism" and says that "TeleSur English's loss of integrity reflects badly on all socialists, thus it needs to be critiqued so that it can be corrected," ending by saying that "here are a number of immediate steps that TeleSUR could take to ameliorate their misdirection and work towards creating a genuine voice for the construction of a new communications order focused on social, political and economic justice." This is so laughable because the news channel is still around, churning out new articles every day, so clearly he doesn't follow or read the publication as I do on a daily basis, and realize the role it plays in serving as an effective counter to horrid bourgeois media. Such pieces do not help move the Bolivarian Revolution forward but actually provide ammunition to capitalist propagandists. Still, TeleSur English deserves to be criticized as it is a bastion for Chinese revisionism in Latin America and is generally not critical of left-leaning governments in Latin America.

Relatively recently, the US imposed sanctions on the "fledgling Petro" of Venezuela, a so-called cyrptocurrency which is more of a commodity than anything else, which may not help move the country forward, instead helping certain bourgeoisie allied with the government. There is no doubt that the murderous empire continues to wage economic war on the Venezuelan people, which Amnesty International basically ignored by saying they have "no position," while the country serves a major role in the Caribbean region, with continuing propaganda about migration from Venezuela, including from Gallup itself, which declared that "…,ore than four in 10 residents (41%) in 2017 said they would like to move to another country permanently if they could…a small majority of Venezuelans say they would like to remain in their country." Upcoming in May will be the country-wide elections, for which digital cards can be used which is problematic, while the country struggles with remnants of its colonial past, like bullfighting, to give an example. There was, relatively recently, a meeting of "more than 800 social leaders, journalists, politicians and activists participating from 95 countries," in "international solidarity…in Caracas," including people such as Bolivan President Evo Morales," and releasing the following declaration:

> *We, citizens from distinct countries, social movements and organisations, political parties, women, youths, workers, creators and intellectuals, peasants, and religious leaders, gathered here in Caracas on the 5, 6 and 7th March 2018, reaffirm our solidarity and militant support of the Venezuelan people, the Bolivarian Revolution and its popular government, which is headed by Nicolas Maduro Moros. We energetically reject the grave escalation of aggressions against Venezuela's democracy and sovereignty by the war-like government of Donald Trump, global corporate powers, and the American imperialist military-industrial apparatus, which looks to overthrow the legitimate government of Venezuela, destroy the*

project of Bolivarian democracy and expropriate the natural resources of the Venezuelan nation. We denounce that this operation against Venezuela forms part of a global strategy of neo-colonialization in Latin America and the Caribbean which seeks to impose a new era of servitude and looting through the resurrection of the shameful Monroe Doctrine, a plan which has already begun in numerous countries across the continent. We reject the threat of Donald Trump of a potential military intervention in Venezuela and we alert that such declarations by him are not mere charlatanism. The military option against the Bolivarian Revolution forms part of the strategic and geopolitical doctrine of the US for the 21st Century. The world must know that a military aggression against Venezuela would provoke a crisis in the region of historic dimensions and uncountable and unpredictable human, economic, and ecological impact. We warn imperialism and their elites lackeys that play this game: the peoples of Latin America, the Caribbean and the world will never allow that Venezuela be touched by the ambitions of the American military boot! If, in their crazy obsession, the hawks of Washington dare attack Venezuela, the homeland of Simon Bolívar, as it was more than 200 years ago, will again be the tomb of an empire. We denounce the blatant pressure of US imperialism on the region's governments to involve them in political, diplomatic, and even military operations against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. With these actions, they seek to destroy regional integration and bring about the de-facto abolition of the principle of the founding charter of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States which declares the region as a zone of peace. We reject the shameful and historical opposed attitude of governments in the region that have caved in to Washington's politics through the creation of illegal and spurious organisms such as the so-called Group of Lima. The shameful regional elites who today lead the plundering of their peoples, hand over their *sovereignty to the transnational corporations, and increase poverty, inequality and violate human rights, lack any moral and political authority to question Venezuelan democracy. We reject the unilateral and illegal sanctions of the US Government and the European Union against the Venezuelan people, which seek to destroy its economy and break their democratic will. Blockades and sanctions are crimes against humanity carried out by the international capitalist system, and are severely hurting the Venezuelan people by sabotaging their productive, commercial and financial processes, preventing access to food, medicines and essential goods. We reject the perverse U.S. sabotage of the process of dialogue developed in the Dominican Republic and reiterate that only the absolute respect for the sovereignty of Venezuela, non-interference in their internal affairs, sincere dialogue and electoral processes based on Venezuelan legislation can define the path to recover the political coexistence between Venezuelans. In this regards, we welcome the call for presidential, regional legislators and councilorelections for May 20, a result of a political agreement with a sector of the Venezuelan opposition. In these absolutely constitutional and legitimate elections, the Venezuelan people in a transparent and sovereign way will decide the course of their homeland.We alert the peoples of the world to the counterproductive intentions of international governments and organizations that are directly involved in the war against Venezuela to not recognize the results of the elections on May 20, and accelerate attacks after what – no doubt – will be a real democratic expression of the Venezuelan people. We welcome and support the declaration of the presidential summit of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America ALBA-TCP that categorically rejects the exclusion of Venezuela from the next Summit of the Americas, to be held in the city of Lima, Peru. Similarly, we support all diplomatic and political actions that governments, countries and peoples take to defend plurality and political*

> *diversity in the continent and to safeguard the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples. We recognize the heroic resistance of the people of Venezuela when confronted by the ravages of economic aggression, the financial blockade and all the forms of sabotage that Venezuela is suffering from, and support the economic, financial, political and diplomatic strategy that the Bolivarian Government and President Nicolas Maduro are carrying out to overcome the problems and construct the humanist model of Bolivarian socialism. We are committed to continue the battle for the truth, peace and the sovereignty of Venezuela, to expand the ties of friendship, solidarity and revolutionary commitment to the Venezuelan people. The peoples of the world, the consciousness of all those who struggle for the just cause of mankind, accompanies at this time and always the Bolivarian revolution, its leadership and its people. We are convinced that Venezuela will be able to – through dialogue, respect for the Constitution, and the indefatigable democratic will of his people – overcome the problems that besets it, and that the Bolivarian revolution will remain a beacon of hope for the peoples of the world who search for a worthy and just destination for humanity. In commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the physical passing of Commander Hugo Chávez, historical leader of the Venezuelan people, from Caracas we say to the world: Venezuela is not alone, we are all with her!*

At the same time, leftist organizations in Venezuela have sided with Nicolas Maduro, saying they will support him in the upcoming elections (which the U$ wants to sabotage), including the Bolivar and Zamora Revolutionary Current (CRBZ), “a radical grassroots current within the PSUV,” the PCV, which reached a “groundbreaking accord” with the PSUV, to confront the crisis of Venezuelan capitalism in the days ahead, and the Leftist Homeland for All party (PPT) doing the same, with other elements in Venezuela taking steps forward to/in socialism from its [then] current basis. While this is happening, Maduro has called for UN election observers, with Venezuela denouncing opposition plans for violence after the elections, which has five candidates running currently, with the main opposition group kicking out Henri Falcon after he decided to run in the elections they are boycotting. Additionally, Raul Castro of Cuba has said that a defense of Venezuela should be a major goal for ALBA in the days ahead. With human rights imperialists supporting economic aggression, pushed by the imperialists for their own aims, there is also, as Venezuela Analysis put it, a continued backing "of millions of grassroots Chavistas like Javier," but has also clear that "important swathes of Venezuela's popular classes have lost faith in the president and his party since mobilizing en masse to reelect Chávez with over eight million votes in 2012" with fallout of reformist policies "measured at the ballot box" and there is an "absence of any autonomous, mass-based political force to the left of the PSUV that could conceivably channel the deep discontent in a revolutionary direction, or which minimally has the power to hold the government to account." Still, as noted in the same article, "there is little doubt that Maduro will handily win his reelection gambit" as the "opposition remains deeply divided following its devastating back-to-back defeats in regional and local elections" with the "consensus of the Bolivarian left" being that "the primary contradiction is with Western imperialism and the right-wing opposition, which must be opposed at all costs" meaning that those in the "international left have a duty to stand in unconditional solidarity with the Bolivarian government and its people against imperialism" but should also "offer our thoughtful critiques aimed at backing grassroots struggles to rejuvenate and radicalize the revolution." This is important since the U$ State Department bellows that "deepening the rupture of Venezuela's constitutional and democratic order will not solve the nation's crises...A free and fair election should include the full participation of all political parties and political leaders," even as they respect the opposition leaving the election, showing that this again is absurd and empty rhetoric, in keeping with accepted propaganda.

The country, as it stands now, is beset by an opposition boycott, ban from the Summit of the Americas, threats of a military coup by U$ imperialists, and the OAS interfering as they favor U$ imperialism. The Cubans are strongly and undeniably in solidarity, as is Bolivian President Evo Morales, the Communist Party of Chile, with continuing border disputes with Colombia, as Venezuela defends itself and its sovereignty from obvious subversion from the capitalist poles of power in the world. Maduro is the candidate for the PSUV and there has been a proposed peace deal between the opposition and government, which has partially faltered. Maduro was right to send a message of unity and peace to Venezuelans, as he did in February, and the 15th ALBA-TCP (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Trade Treaty of the Peoples) summit, started by Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro,was correct to call for the

> *strict observance of the Objectives and Principles of the UN Charter and International Law…reiterate the decision to continue constructing a new just and inclusive, multi-centric and plural-polar international order…denounce attempts to revive the Monroe Doctrine…highlight the lack of moral authority of [United]…States to offer lessons regarding democracy and human rights to the regional countries…reiterate our commitment with Latin American and Caribbean unity in the search for its own destiny, independence and sovereignty, without interference that affect our peoples and development…express our disagreement with the*

announcement of a group of countries in the continent…constituting an interference in the internal affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela…demand respect to the legality to the organization of the Summit of the Americas…demand the right for Venezuela's participation in the event and we propose to exercise diplomatic and political measures to guarantee our goal…urge the international community to abstain in any type of coercive exercises against the political independence and territorial integrity of Venezuela…reject unilateral coercive measures and sanctions imposed against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that affects the life and development of the noble people of Venezuela and the enjoyment of their rights…reaffirm our firm support to the Constitutional President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro Moros and his Government and democratic process that he leads…recognize the inalienable rights of the Venezuelan people to hold and participate in Presidential and Legislative elections on the national, state and municipal levels in compliance with their norms and internal procedures…support the efforts of the Venezuelan authorities and people to find their own answers to their political and economic challenges…denounce the advances of the political and economic corruption in the region expressed by the growing inequality in the distribution of its resources, social exclusion of the most humble sectors, and the financial influence of a large capital in political campaigns…reaffirm the political commitment in the fight against corruption and compliance to the international commitment in the field…reiterate the international community's demand for the unconditional lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba, whose extraterritoriality affects all States…highlight the commitment of the Bolivian Government and people in peacefully searching for solutions through International Law…reiterate our support to our brothers in the Caribbean, victims of

> *natural disasters and climate change and we will contribute in an active manner to overcome the damages provoked by recent hurricanes….call on all social and political organizations in the continent to participate in forums and activities of social movements and progressive forces that will be held in 2018…[and] defend the unity of the diversity in Our America.*

This leads to my final comments on Venezuela and the DPRK. The U$ State Department, in their Investment Climate report for Venezuela, shows that Nicaragua and Cuba are top investment partners. Describing how the country is a "difficult climate for foreign investors" they note that the "petroleum industry provides roughly 94 percent of export earnings, 40 percent of government revenues, and 11 percent of GDP," saying that Maduro aimed to increase "state control over the economy" in response to the economic crisis. They add that with this, the Venezuelan government "retains state control of the hydrocarbons sector" but adding that even with "Venezuela's expropriations in the petroleum sector...since 2009, several international companies have agreed to create joint venture companies with PDVSA to extract crude oil." They further complain that "Venezuela has a history of extrajudicial action against foreign investors" but talk with glee about the "three existing free trade zones" in the country, while noting that "Venezuela's financial services sector...[and] Venezuelan credit markets are heavily regulated," with "strict currency controls" since 2003. With that, they add that "State Owned Enterprises...are dominant in diverse sectors of the Venezuelan economy, including agribusiness, food, hydrocarbons, media, mining, telecommunications, and tourism," with private firms at a "disadvantage." Venezuelan communists have rallied support behind Maduro in the past as part of a unity effort even as they retain their criticisms, if you read the whole statement, which is valid without question. Additionally, they argued that "in recent years the crisis of the exhausted capitalist dependent and rentier accumulation model of Venezuela has worsened, generating a growing impoverishment in the living and working conditions of the popular and working masses of the city and the countryside...progressive-reformist projects that have taken place in Venezuela and other Latin American countries since the beginning of this century, since they are not directed by genuinely revolutionary organizations, lack the necessary class content to go beyond social assistance measures" while also criticizing the development of the Petro, a so-called "cryptocurrency."

On this note, I conclude this section and believe that in the days and years to come, the relationship between the DPRK and Venezuela will remain strong, creating an interdependent relationship opposing imperialist aggression.

“Advancing the cause of socialism”: The DPRK and the Cuban Revolution:

In 1959 (Juche 48), the Cuban Revolution was victorious and rode to power with the fleeing of the autocratic Batista, a victory for the proletariat. The Republic of Cuba would soon be formed and have a socialist government, quickly allying with the Soviets, but still fighting to maintain their independence. Through all of this, the DPRK, which was, in 1959, 16 years old, began to become an ally of Cuba, learning from its experience.In 1960 (Juche 49), Che Guevara visited the DPRK (pictured above), said that the government there was a model for “Fidel Castro’s Cuba to follow” with relations between the two countries established on August 26 (Samuel Ramini, “The North Korea-Cuba Connection,” *The Diplomat*, Jun 7, 2016; Benjamin R. Young, “Revolutionary Solidarity: Castro’s cozy relationship with North Korea,” *NK News*, Nov 18, 2016). Even so, the DPRK felt that it wanted to “avoid Cuba’s dependency on Soviet weaponry” after seeing Khrushchev retreat from confronting the murderous empire during the Cuban Missile Crisis, as it transitioned toward a “military-first policy.” 56 years later, in 2016 (Juche 106), *Pyongyang Times* commemorated the establishment of relations in 1960, saying that both countries have supported each other over the years in “efforts to enhance unity and cohesion between socialist countries, expand the Non-Aligned Movement and safeguard global peace against the imperialists’ moves towards aggression and war.” They also added that “the Korean people regard the Cubans as their old comrades-in-arms and close friends and always extend full support and solidarity to Cuba’s cause of socialism,” further saying that both countries have “long maintained the traditional ties and deepened cooperation with each other” with the signing of protocol “on the economic, scientific and technological cooperation and exchange of commodities for 2016 as part of the efforts to promote bilateral exchange and cooperation in different fields.” As such, *Pyongyang Times* said that both Cuba and the DPRK, “will continue to strengthen mutual support and cooperation in a bid to realize their common ideal of socialism, upholding the banner of independence against imperialism.” That should be the ideal of all socialist states. In 1980 (Juche 69), and again in 2016, the WPK and Communist Party of Cuba held talks to strengthen relations between the two countries, with their close relations “explained by a shared normative solidarity” against the murderous empire, which has occasionally “manifested itself in symbolically significant shipments of arms and manufactured goods.” Cuba had become “one of North Korea’s most consistent international allies.” Fidel visited the DPRK in 1986 (Juche 75), further looking to cement the ties between the two countries. Even if there was such a disagreement, likely in the 1980s, Kim Il Sung of the DPRK “sent us [the Cubans] 100,000 AK-47 rifles and its corresponding ammo without charging a cent,” after the Soviets failed to sent Cuba arms to defend itself from invasion, as Fidel Castro wrote in 2013 (Juche 102) (David Iaconangelo,” Fidel Castro Says North Korea Sent Cuba Free Weapons During Cold War,” *Latin Times*, Aug 14, 2013; Mariano Castillo. Catherine E. Shoichet and Patrick Oppmann, “Cuba: ‘Obsolete’ weapons on ship were going to North Korea for repair,” *CNN*, Jul 17, 2013; “Cuba admits sending weapons to North Korea,” *Al Jazeera*, Jul 16, 2013). With such statements, imperialists thought that arms were being “illicitly” sent from Cuba to the DPRK, trying to weaken the relations between the two countries.

After Raul Castro became the President of Cuba in 2008 (Juche 97), there seemed to be “signs” that the bilateral relationship between the DPRK and Cuba had strengthened, with claims of a “Cuba-North Korea arms deal” during the Obama years, not unfazed by the normalization of U$-Cuban relations which has been somewhat weakened by the orange menace. This has manifested itself in the fact that Cuba has stood in solidarity with JucheKorea,with trading of "sugar and railway equipment" between the two countries beginning in January 2016, along with "Cuba's intelligence sharing and close cooperation with the DPRK" which some bourgeois analysts detest. Additionally, there are organizations such as the Cuban Committee for Supporting Korea's Reunification and the Korean Committee for Solidarity with Cuba present in the DPRK, and quotes in Cuban newspapers backing the latter (Lucy Williamson, "North Korea and Cuba: Allies in isolation," *BBC News*, Jul 17, 2013). This is evident in papers like *Rodong Sinmun*, which noted in July 2017 that the "delegation of the Prensa Latina News Agency of Cuba led by President Luis Enrique Gonzalez Acosta visited Mangyongdae, the birthplace of President Kim Il Sung....The head of the delegation praised the President as a great revolutionary."

On November 25th of last year there was a memorial service at Cuba's embassy in Pyongyang"to mark the first anniversary of the death of Fidel Castro" (KCNA, "Memorial service held for Fidel Castro," *Pyongyang Times*, Nov 27, 2017). To honor this, Kim Jong Un sent a basket of flowers, which were "laid at a portrait of the leader of the Cuban revolution" with the event attended by Kim Sung Du (chairman of the Education Commission and chairman of the Korean Committee for Solidarity with Cuba), WPK officials, those from the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries the General Bureau for Affairs with Diplomatic Corps, and the Cuban ambassador Jesus De Los Angeles Aise Sotolongo, and his "embassy staff members," along with other officials of the DPRK government. Additionally, the International Affairs Department of the WPK Central Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Korean Committee for Solidarity with Cuba, and the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces all laid flowers. At the event itself, speakers said that Fidel was "a prominent political activist who had established a socialist system for the first time in the Western Hemisphere and devoted his all to the just cause of national prosperity, people's well-being and independence against imperialism." The article in KCNA on the subject also noted that last year, Kim Jong Un visited the Cuban embassy, in Pyongyang, "to express his deep condolences" over the death of Fidel (even declaring a "three-day mourning period" to pay tribute to himwhich is the same thing that Fidel did after the death of Kim Jong-Il) and "dispatched a high-level mourners' delegation to Cuba" ("N.K. declares 3-day mourning over ex-Cuban leader Castro's death," *Yonhap News*, Nov 28, 2016). The same article also said the following about the strong ties between the two countries:

> *They [speakers at thee vent] reaffirmed that the baton of bilateral fraternal ties forged by the preceding leaders of the two countries would invariably be passed on for ever even if time passes and generation changes. The participants recalled the career of Fidel Castro who had performed distinguished services for victoriously advancing the cause of socialism and boosting the bilateral ties.*

The relationship between Cuba and the DPRK is strong without a doubt. In November of last year, the foreign minister of Cuba and the counterpart in the DPRK, "rejected the United

States' "unilateral and arbitrary" demands" as anyone with sense should (Reuters Staff, "Cuba, North Korea reject 'unilateral and arbitrary' U.S. demands," *Reuters*, Nov 22, 2017; Linley Sanders, "Cuba Backs North Korea's Kim Jong Un in War On Trump: Havana Calls For 'Respect For Peoples' Sovereignty'," *Newsweek*, Nov 23, 2017; Sarah Marsh, "Cuba and North Korea balk at 'unilateral and arbitrary' demands from the US," *Business Insider* (reprinted from *Reuters*), Nov 23, 2017). These two ministers "strongly rejected the unilateral and arbitrary lists and designations established by the U.S. government which serve as a basis for the implementation of coercive measures which are contrary to international law" while also discussing "the respective efforts carried out in the construction of socialism according to the realities inherent to their respective countries." This is nothing new. In June 2015, Raúl Castro hosted the WPK's secretary of international relations, Kang Sok Su, while in September Kim Jong-Un received "Cuban Vice President Miguel Díaz-Canel in Pyongyang" to give an example of their relations (Mary Anastasia O'Grady, "North Korea's Cuban Friends," *Wall Street Journal* (opinion), Jan 10, 2016; Robert Vallencia, "New Cold War? North Korea Strengthens Ties with Cuba After Threatening Nuclear Attack on U.S.," *Newsweek*, Nov 17, 2017; Sarah Marsh, "Castro meets North Korea minister amid hope Cuba can defuse tensions," *Reuters*, Nov 24, 2017; Sarah Marsh, "Cuba and North Korea hold anti-US meeting and reject Donald Trump's 'arbitrary' nuclear demands," *The Independent*, Nov 23, 2017; Franco Ordoñez, "Trump's axis of evil: Cuba, Venezuela, Iran and North Korea," *McClatchy*, Jan 31, 2018). Such relations are vital since, reportedly, Singapore and Philippines said they would cut trade relations with the DPRK, showing that they have no backbone and are falling into the hands of imperialists. After all, Cuba, the DPRK, Iran, and Venezuela are part of the orange menace's new "axis of evil." With this, Fidel was right to say in 2013 that

> *...I had the honor of meeting Kim Il Sung, a historic figure, notably courageous and revolutionary. If war breaks out there, the peoples of both parts of the Peninsula will be terribly sacrificed, without benefit to all or either of them. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was always friendly with Cuba, as Cuba has always been and will continue to be with her. Now that the country has demonstrated its technical and scientific achievements, we remind her of her duties to the countries which have been her great friends, and it would be unjust to forget that such a war would particularly affect more than 70% of the population of the planet. If a conflict of that nature should break out there, the government of Barack Obama in his second mandate would be buried in a deluge of images which would present him as the most sinister character in the history of the*

> *United States. The duty of avoiding war is also his and that of the people of the United States.*

Now, although bourgeois media like *The Guardian* claimed that Fidel "gently admonished" the DPRK, but "used stronger language in addressing Washington," the above quote shows it is more aimed at the U$ imperialists than anything else (Associated Press in Havana, "Fidel Castro to North Korea: nuclear war will benefit no one," *The Guardian*, Apr 5, 2013). The relationship continues afoot, with Cuban embassy staff members, this year, visiting the "Pyongyang Maternity Hospital on January 5 to mark the 59th anniversary of the victorious Cuban revolution" and Cuban ambassador Jesus De Los Angeles Aise Sotolongo hosting a reception "on January 25 on the occasion of the 59th anniversary of the victorious Cuban revolution," inviting "DPRK Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho, Ryu Myong Son, deputy department director of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, So Ho Won, vice-chairman of the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and relevant officials." The relations between the two countries will continue to grow, building upon Kim Il-Sung's 1967 phrase that "it is an internationalist duty for every revolutionary people to fight to defend the victories of the Cuban Revolution," the sending of 200 technicians to Cuba in 1964 (and even more in 1969), the "solidarity farms with the Caribbean country," the sympathy against the economic blockade on Cuba and for the "freedom of the Cuban Five antiterrorists" (Fekerfanta (a Spanish-speaking comrade),"Proletarian Nationalism of North Korea," *From Pyongyang to Havana*, Aug 8, 2013. Translated webpage. Original webpage in Spanish. The latter two webpages have working videos. Other webpages by this comrade: "In Hostile Earth: North Korea. Jails and Manipulation" Feb 2015 about an anti-DPRK documentary and reality of DPRK (original page), "Socialist Construction in North Korea" Dec 2014 post (original page), "Sistiaga, manipulation, and North Korea" Oct 2014 post (original page), "The popular democracy of North Korea" May 2014 post (original page), "The "dark night" of North Korea" Feb 2014 post (original post), "Manipulation against North Korea (2013)" Dec 2013 post (original post), "[2013] Socialist construction in North Korea" Nov 2013 post (original post), "Economic blockade against North Korea" Oct 2013 post (original post), "Persection of Christians in North Korea?" Jun 2013 post (original post), "Cities of North Korea III [Sariwon]" Apr 2013 post (original post), "Dismantling lies I: Haircuts in North Korea" Mar 2013 post (original post), "The women in North Korea" Mar 2013 post (original post), "Rural areas in North Korea" Jan 2013 post (original post), "[2012] Socialist construction in North Korea" Dec 2012 post (original post), "Cities of North Korea II [Hamhung]" Nov 2012 post (original post), "Traffic in North Korea" Nov 2012 post (original post), and "Disabled in North Korea" Oct 2012 post (original post)).

Changing alliances for the DPRK: Iraq in 1968, Iran in 1979

On February 8, 1963, the CIA gave "economic assistance" for the coup that day by the Ba'ath Party, thinking this would benefit U$ policy. Because it was against "Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim (or Qassem) [who] enacted a land reform program, constructed a massive urban development for Revolution City...and partially nationalized the oil industry." However, this is a bit simplistic. As the Ba-ath Party, fully called the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party – Iraq wrote in their report, titled "Revolutionary Iraq 1968-1973," the situation was a bit more nuanced. While thousands of communists were killed in the February 8 coup, on November 18 there was another coup led by those favoring Nasser in the Ba'ath Party, which the Ba'ath Party described as a "shock...[and] loss of the revolutionary gains and the loss of many Party martyrs who fell while bravely fighting the regressive move." The Ba'athists were out of power and on February 23, 1966, the Ba'athists in Syria would engage in a "military coup against the national authority of the Party as represented by the National Command...[leading to a] vertical and horizontal split within the Party...[with] psychological, organizational and political effects of such a split...in Iraq," leading to further schisms. Those who took power in Syria would be Nureddin al-Atassi from 1966 to 1970 (he was the second Ba'ath Party president in Syria, after Amin al-Hafiz who served from 1963 to 1966), then Ahmad al-Khatib (1970-1971), and finally Hafiz Al-Assad (1971-2000) who would soon be followed by his son, Bashar al-Assad. It was 1966 that the DPRK established diplomatic relations with the Syrians. On July 17, 1968, two years after those in Syria took matters into their own hands, Saddam Hussein and Salah Oman al-Ali engaged in a successful coup in the Republic of Iraq. That year, the DPRK would establish diplomatic relations with Iraq.

Three years later, Kim Il Sung talked to a delegation of Iraqi journalists, saying that in the past Korea "was a colonial, semi-feudal society in the past," having to fight off U$ imperialists, he said they currently had "an advanced socialist system, under which all people work and live a happy life helping each other" with achievements through the leadership of WPK and the people, with a "dedication to the idea of Juche." In response to a question from one of the journalists, Sung said that the Iraqi people had, by that point, attained "national independence through their protracted arduous struggle against the domination of foreign imperialism," adding that "antagonism and discord between nations...are advantageous only to the imperialists and simply detrimental to the people." He also applauded a "peaceful, democratic solution of the Kurd national problem," and said that the government of Iraq stands "firm in the ranks of struggle against imperialism and colonialism." Later on in press conference he said that "the Korean and Iraqi peoples are close comrades-in-arms fighting against the common enemy...part of the great unity of the Asian and African peoples against imperialism and colonialism," while also focusing on a number of other matters like the "expansion of the aggressive war by the U.S. imperialists in Indo-China," noting that those of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos have made Indochina "a graveyard for the aggressors," while adding that the "Korean people will assist those fighting against U.S. imperialism in Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos." It seems evident why Sung supported the Iraqis despite their problematic history. For one, the Ba'athists, at least openly, had an ideology to "guide for the masses [and show]...the way for unity, freedom and socialism," and that they were engaging in an "Arab revolution" and differently from in 1963, when the party failed to lead "a revolutionary Party" after this revolution it became necessary to go a different path. As such, "imperialist countries such as the U.S., Britain and other reactionary regimes...mobilized all of their political, technological, material and highly developed informational potential" to bring down their government. Additionally, the party, at the time, dedicated itself to "unity, freedom and socialism in order to rebuild a united, free and democratic Arab society," with a duty to "achieve a truly democratic, socialist and integrated state which could be the model for the other states in the Arab World... and the Third World," while strongly fighting "the imperialist Zionist enemy." Subsequently there was a "decisive move of nationalization" with the government talking country of "65% of the oil producing sector of the national economy" and was basically in "control of 99.75% of the land from which oil is extracted." They also worked to establish a "progressive front" in the region while making the society as a whole more democratic. It is the fact that the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party declared itself as a "socialist revolutionary Party which considers socialism imperative for the liberation, union and resurgence of the Arab Nation," that they received Korean support, even through they were just economic nationalists in reality. Some remnants of "socialism" or what can really more actually be called bourgeois nationalism stayed on for years. *Washington Post* reporter Rajiv Chandrasekaran wrote about this in 2006, noting that the Ba'ath party was broadly based among professionals, that the state subsidized fertilizer, electricity, and gasoline costs, along with varied state-owned enterprises (Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), pp 4, 30-31, 40, 47-48, 54, 61, 70, 78-80, 107, 116-118, 122, 124-127, 131, 134, 135, 137, 140-143). At the same time, there was "loud and boisterous" stock exchange in Baghdad, which was re-opened by the U$ after the war, a sign of capitalism (not socialism), and obvious presence of a petty bourgeoisie in the country itself, and Saddam consolidated more power for his enrichment, while the population suffered, with his government backed by the imperialists. Of course, after the 2003 invasion, the U$ reversed all these elements, engaging in mass privatization by abandoning "Saddam's centrally-planned, socialist welfare state for a globalized free-market system" (I'm not sure if it was a "socialist welfare state," but it wasn't a state which had privatized industries) and resulting widespread anger by the Iraqi population, thanks to unemployment caused by these horrid policies in this new "capitalist utopia."

On September 22, 1980, Iraq, led by Saddam, invaded Iran, leaded by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The war, which drained the national coffers of Iraq, putting the country "tens of billions of dollars into debt," in a war which lasted almost 8 years to August 20, 1988. Years later, in 1991, he would invade Kuwait (apparently with U$ permission), resulting in "debilitating United Nations sanctions" which cut off "Iraq from the world." In the Iran-Iraq war, from 1980 to 1988, Canadians, Danes, Egyptians, East German revisionists, Hungarians, Polish, Qataris (initially), Romanians, Singaporeans, Sudanese, UAE, Yugoslavian revisionists, Saudis, Kuwaitis, and Jordanians supported the Iraqis and no others. However, there were a number of individuals who gave arms to both sides: the Soviet revisionists (arms to Iran covertly), Austrians, Chinese revisionists, French imperialists, the West Germans, Italians, Japanese, Portuguese, South African racists, Spanish, Swiss, Turks, the U$ imperialists (to Iran covertly as uncovered in the Iran-Contra scandal), and UK imperialists. There were a number of others that directly gave to Iran: the Ethiopians, the Belgians, the Argentinians, reportedly the Zionists (covertly to establish more influence), Netherlands, ROK, Libyans, Pakistanis, Syrians, Swedish (covertly), and the DPRK, last but not least. This is no surprise since in 1982, the latter had extended its "international solidarity to the revolutionary state of Iran to fight in the war against Western-backed Republic of Iraq" while the Koreans had established relations with the DPRK in 1973, while the Shah was still in power, but relations was not fully forged until after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, five years after Hafiz Al-Assad had visited Pyongyang himself. During the ensuring war, the DPRK would become a "major supplier of arms to Iran" and it would have a "history of cooperating on missile technology" with Iran as one website reported. As one might imagine, this makes it no surprise that Iraq cut off "diplomatic relations in October 1980," with the Koreans following suit by continuing their alliance with Iran for the next 38 years to the present-day and never again re-opening diplomatic relations with Iraq. As the war raged between Iran and Iraq, the weapons from Korea flowed in so much that the country "accounted for 40% of all Iranian arms purchases." One commentary by a Zionist, Kenneth R. Timmerman, with parts within the text about the Koreans being an arms conduit for other countries removed as it makes them seem to be a colony of the Chinese or Soviets when they are not, reported in the late 1980s that

> *…The North Koreans produce a certain amount of T-54/T-55 tanks and other equipment under license from the Soviet Union. They also continue to purchase large quantities of weaponry from both the USSR and the People's Republic of China…The first delivery [to Iran]…through North Korea occurred in October1980…the next major deal, for an estimated $1 billion, was negotiated…by North Korea…in exchange for cash and 2 million tons of Iranian crude oil. The equipment was of Chinese origin, and was most likely taken from existing Korean inventory. Deliveries are said to have occured in stages over the1981-83 period, and included 150 T-62 main battle tanks, 400 artillery pieces, 1000 mortars, 600 anti-aircraft cannons, and 12,000 machine guns and rifles…an additional 300T-54/T-55 Korean-built tanks should be added to the list. Weapons deliveries from North Korea were worth $800 million in 1982 alone…Since then, Iran is said to have refused large quantities of locally-produced North Korean equipment, due to its poor quality…[In August 1983] the North Koreans sent 300 military advisors to Tehran…Soviet willingness to supply military assistance, training, and weapons to Iran was codified by a pair of military agreements signed with the Iranian government in July 1981….These agreements resulted in the arrival of some 3000 Soviet advisors in Iran, the building of new ports and military airfi[e]lds by*

> *Soviet and North Korean technicians, and the construction of the largest Soviet listening base outside the Warsaw Pact*

Others, relying on Timmerman and some other sources, note that in 1985, Iran says it will finance the "North Korean missile program in exchange for missiles and missile technology," the same year that the country received R-17 Elbrus (Scud-B) missiles from the Libyans and Koreans. Additionally, that year, work on the Mushak-120 missile in Iran, "reportedly begins with assistance from China, North Korea, and others at a Chinese-built factory near Semnan," while in the summer, "Iran approaches both North Korea and China looking for ballistic missiles and missile technology." More than this, Hashemi Rafsanjani, speaker of the Iranian Parliament (from 1980-1989) signs a deal, that year, worth $500 million, to "receive North Korean missiles based on Soviet Scud designs" from the Koreans, while he also visits China and the DPRK "to establish military cooperation." As a result, the Koreans agree to "give Iran HN-5A SAMs, and to help in building an assembly site for them" and they also "offer aid to build production factories for the HN-5A and the HQ-2, to engage in technology transfers for Iran's missile program, and to assist in the building of an assembly site for the missile that is the same as the North Korean Scud-Mod." From 1985 to 1988, the DPRK receives 240 Scud-B missiles from the Soviets, and 100 are "re-sold to Iran," further showing their solidarity. By March 1986, Iran is receiving arms from the DPRK, Libya, and Syria, even paying the Koreans over the next five years (1986-1991) money in "oil purchase debt" for the weapons they had purchased. Beyond this, the "Defense" Intelligence Agency (DIA) of the U$ declared that

> *the Middle East has been the major market for North Korean arms, with Iran and Libya making most purchases. Sales to Iran peaked in the early 1980s at the height of the Iran-Iraq war…The weapons North Korea exports include large quantities of munitions, small arms, artillery, multiple rocket launchers, tanks, armored personnel carriers, air defense artillery, SCUD-B short-range ballistic missiles, and some naval craft…North Korea presents itself as a fellow revolutionary struggling with constraints of relations with the superpowers…During the Iran-Iraq war, North Korea trained Iranian gunners to operate the Chinese mobile surface-to-air system and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in unconventional warfare techniques*

In another part of the same report, the DIA declared that "the current size, organization, disposition, and combat capabilities of the North Korean Army…maintains North Korea's territorial integrity and assists in internal security, civic action projects, economic construction, and a variety of agricultural programs." Then there's the *New York Times* article in 1987 declaring that the DPRK was involved in arms trafficking to Iran, serving as a conduit for the soviets (John Tagliabue, "How $18 Million Got Soviet Weapons To Iran," *New York Times*, May 27, 1987). With all these claims, it is hard to know how much or what the Koreans sent to Iran. A trade register showing the DPRK as the supplier and Iran as the recipient noted that between 1982 and 1987, the following weapons were delivered:

200 self-propelled MRLs (multiple rocket launchers)

150 tanks

6 MiG-19 fighter aircraft

200 towed MRLs

480 towed guns

4000 anti-tank missiles

3 patrol craft

20 anti-ship missiles

20 self-propelled guns

100 R-17 Elbrus short-range ballistic missiles

That may be the most accurate you can get on support Korea lent to the Iranians. Also consider the Special National Intelligence Assessment in 1985 which declared that there were 50-100 Korean advisers, T-62 tanks, SA-7 surface-to-air missiles, antitank missiles and launchers, small arms, field artillery, mortars, rockets, and naval mines from the Koreans in the country at that time. They also outlined, in varying other documents how the Koreans were arming the Iranians, to the chagrin of the imperialists. Such support was re-paid in 1989 when then Iranian President and later Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, met with Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang. Before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Saddam reportedly "sought to acquire Rodong missile systems from North Korea" and sent a "$10 million down payment from Baghdad," but Iraq never "received any missiles or missile technology from the deal" showing that the Koreans would not abandon their solidarity with the Iranians against imperialism, clearly knowing what side Saddam was on, the side of repression and global capitalism, not national liberation. Since that time, the two countries have not restored diplomatic relations, even after "the Iraqi population of around 33 million has only been subject to short periods of relative peace as competing interests struggle for control" since the 2003 invasion as Oxfam declared. There were a number of mentions of Iraq on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the DPRK but these were in reference to "depleted uranium shells seriously affecting human health and the environment" used by U$ imperialists in Iraq, forms of U$ war which could be used to bring down "the social system of the DPRK," the false pretenses of such imperialists to "overthrow legitimate governments in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya," and noting that "the U.S. deleted Iraq and Libya from the list of "state sponsor of terrorism" that gave in to its pressure [and] it also deleted Cuba," showing that the "the label of "state sponsor of terrorism"" is just an imperial tool that can be attached or removed at "any time in accordance with its interests."

The relation between the DPRK and Iran has been ironclad since the 1980s. After all, in May 1979, Kim Il Sung sent Khomeini a telegram congratulating him on the "victory of the Islamic Revolution," and on June 25th of the same year, Khomeini met with the "DPRK Ambassador Chabeong Ouk in Qom," on what was the "29th anniversary of the aggression of U.S. troops against the meek nation of Korea" to which "Khomeini replied in kind, calling...for the expulsion of American troops from South Korea" (IranWire, "North Korea's Deadly Partnership With Iran," *The Daily Beast*, Aug 11, 2017; Victor D. Cha and Gabriel Scheinmann, "North Korea's Hamas Connection: "Below" the Surface?," *The National Interest*, Sept 4, 2014; Ariel Nathan Pasko, "North Korea: The Israeli Connection," *BreakingIsraelNews*, accessed Feb 7, 2018). The Jewish Virtual Library, which is highly Zionist, says with alarm that "Iran is North Korea's principal customer for weapons and technology, and it has been the site of a number of missile tests carried out on North Korea's behalf. North Korea may have sold one of its most sophisticated missiles, the Nodong...to Iran...North Korean experts are also believed to have helped Iran with its centrifuges." While most of this is likely poppycock, it does say that even the Zionists are afraid of the Koreans. These same people consider the Koreans part of the "anti-American Middle East axis" (of Syria and Iran) and that the Korean relationship with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has existed since 1983. In years since the 1980s, the Koreans worked to help fortify Iran, even though they likely did not smuggle in "missiles in pieces" as Zionists declare, instead creating "friendship farms" in each country in 1996, farms which hold "cultural exchanges, commemorations of Khamenei's visit to North Korea, and commemorations of Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il" every year. By the 2000s, some Iranian officials, "concerned with Iran's integration into the global economy expressed alarm," said the DPRK was a negative example. Take for example, the former chief of the IRGC and Secretary of the Expediency Council, Mohsen Rezaee, who said that if Iran followed "a reactionary stance internationally and a policy of developmental stagnation domestically," it would do no better than the DPRK. Even with this, relations remained strong, with a visit in 2007 by Iran's deputy foreign minister to Pyongyang "as negotiation with its officials for studying and developing bilateral relations" continued, with both countries signing a "plan for exchanges in the cultural, scientific and educational fields." In 2012, a scientific and technological cooperation agreement was signed between the two countries, showing that they are dedicated to strong relations. The next year, the Iranian Parliament approved Mohamed Hasan Nami as communications minister, a person who holds a degree from Kim Il Sung University in state management, and images showed that "Iran maintains a seven-building embassy compound in Pyongyang, at the center of which stands the first mosque in North Korea." Then, in February and September 2014, Javad Zarif, the Iranian Foreign Minister, met with "high-ranking North Korean delegations in February and September 2014." Even so, there was some evidence of "growing distance and diverging trajectories" which bourgeois analysts said would "eventually cause Iran to see its friendship with North Korea as a liability," claiming it has little to offer the Iranians, leaving behind a "relationship that once thrived on friendship farms and mutually admiring founding leaders." However, as recent developments show, this observation was short-sighted. After all, if one Iran-hater, *Amir*

Taheri, is right, the Iranians adopted tactics, used by the Koreans during the Great Fatherland Liberation War (1950-1953), during the Iran-Iraq War, with Khomeini's "resistance economics" loosely based on Juche ideology (Amir Taheri, "Khomeini or Kim? Khamenei's Real Teacher," *Gatestone Institute*, Sept 3, 2017).

In 2017 and 2018, relations between Iran and the DPRK have become even stronger. In May 2017, Choe Hui Chol, the vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, met with the Iranian ambassador in Pyongyang, Seyed Mohsen Emadi, with Chol mentioning the "eye-opening successes being made by the DPRK in bolstering the Juche-based rocket force under the energetic guidance of...Kim Jong Un" and he hoped that the "traditional relations of friendship between the two countries" begun by Iranian leaders and Kim Il Sung "would grow stronger in conformity with common interests of their governments and peoples." In response, Emadi thanked Chol for his comments, adding that the "traditional relations of friendship, provided by the preceding leaders of the two countries" is "favorably developing" under the care of Kim Jong Un, adding that both countries should strive for closer cooperation "in the international arena including the UN and expand the bilateral relations of friendship and cooperation in politics, economy, culture and other fields" (KCNA, "Deputy FM meets Iranian ambassador " Jun 1, 2017. *Pyongyang Times* reprints same article). The following month, Kim Yong Nam sent a message of sympathy to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani expressing "deep sympathy and condolences to the Iranian president and through him to the victims and bereaved families" for terrorist attacks. He added that two countries should strengthen cooperation "in the struggle to oppose all forms of terrorism and ensure world peace and stability." The same month, officials of the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of External Economic Relations, Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and the General Bureau for Affairs with Diplomatic Corps visited the Iranian embassy in Pyongyang, expressing "deep sympathy and consolation to the victims of the incidents and their bereaved families and reiterated the consistent principled stand of the DPRK government against all forms of terrorism." Later on that month, the Indonesian Ambassador in Pyongyang, Bambang Hiendrasto, hosted a reception at the Taedonggang Diplomatic Club, "on behalf of embassies of member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation(OIC)...as regards the end of Ramadan" with Choe Hui Chol present, along with "ambassadors of Indonesia, Syria, Iran, Palestine and Egypt and charges d' affaires ad interim of Nigeria and Pakistan, OIC member states, and embassy officials and their families."

The following month, August, Kim Yong Nam attended the inauguration of Hassan Rouhani in his second term in the Majlis Building in Tehran. Other countries attended as well such as EU representatives, but this showed the connection between the two countries. At his inauguration, Rouhani made a speech, expressing "the stand of his government to develop the economy, strengthen the defence capability, ensure peace and democracy and realize constructive cooperation with the international community" while he also "affirmed that Iran would cope with the U.S. moves for scraping the nuclear agreement with vigilance and make all efforts to ensure peace and stability in the Middle East region." Nam, attended the inauguration with numerous others such as Choe Hui Chol. At the sidelines of the inauguration, Nam, spoke with Robert G. Mugabe, president of the Republic of Zimbabwe, who was also present, showing they were, at that time, part of the anti-imperialist front. Afterwords, Nam attended "a banquet arranged by the Iranian President" (KCNA, "SPA Presidium chief attends Iranian presidential inaugural," *Pyongyang Times*, Aug 7, 2017). The same month, Nam talked with Rouhani, noting that “the line of simultaneously developing the two fronts set out by the Workers’ Party of Korea is being implemented…under the guidance of…Kim Jong Un” and outlined the “achievements gained in the struggle for independence.” He also said there needs to be further development of “friendly and cooperative relations between the DPRK and Iran and the Non-Aligned Movement.” Rouhani responded by saying that “Iran-DPRK relations have developed on a very high stage, expressing the belief that the friendly relations between the two countries which have jointly struggled against the U.S. will boost in broad fields in the future.” Earlier on, Nam had met “Speaker of Majlis Ali Larijani and First Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri of Iran.” Also that month, Pak Pong Ju, Premier of the DPRK, sent a “congratulatory message on Thursday to Eshaq Jahangiri” on his re-appointment as First Vice President of Iran, wishing him “bigger success in his work for the independent development and prosperity of the country and the friendly government and people of Iran happiness and prosperity.” The same day, Ri Yong Ho sent a “congratulatory message to Mohammad Javad Zarif” on his re-appointment as Iran’s foreign minister.

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The month afterwords, September, Rouhani sent a message of greeting to Kim Jong Un, congratulating "Kim Jong Un and the Korean people on the occasion of September 9, the birthday of the DPRK." In the same message he "hoped that the bilateral relations would favorably develop in all fields through cooperation and joint efforts of the peoples of the two countries." Around the same time, the daily paper, *Kayhan*, which reflects the views of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, ran editorials "praising North Korea's "brave defiance of Arrogance" by testing long-range missiles in the face of "cowardly threats" by the United States" with one editorial even inviting "those who urge dialogue with the US to learn from North Korea's "success in humiliating the Great Satan." [238] There were some responses from Western favorites, the reformists, with one of them expressing regret that Iran was asked to "downgrade to the level of "a pariah in a remote corner of Asia," but even so, Kim Yong Nam came to Tehran on a 10-day visit heading "a 30-man military and political delegation" and was "granted a rare two-hours long audience with Khamenei." In October, the next month, relations were still strong. The Iranian Ambassador in Pyongyang, Seyed Mohsen Emadi and his staff members visited the "Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum on the occasion of the DPRK-Iran friendship week" with guests looking around the museum's rooms while they were briefed on "the fact that President Kim Il Sung led the Fatherland Liberation War to victory," and Emadi made "an entry in the visitor's book." He also wished the "the Korean people bigger successes" under the guidance of Kim Jong Un. Additionally, Emadi and his staff "toured the Tower of the Juche Idea, [and] the Sci-Tech Complex," while staff members of the embassy "did friendship labor at the DPRK-Iran Friendship Ripsok Co-op Farm in Mundok County." The same month, Kim Jong Un sent messages to varying "foreign party and state leaders in reply of their congratulatory messages and letters on the 69th founding anniversary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" including those from Cuba, Nepal, Maldives, Bangladesh, Syria, Cambodia, Thailand, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Tajikistan, Indonesia, Mali, Belarus, Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Congo, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Algeria, Tunisia, Eritrea, Dominica, Egypt, Iran, and the "co-chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kim Il Sung–Kim Jong Il Foundation…secretary general of the United Nations…and the director-general of the International Institute of the Juche Idea."

In the last two months of the year, relations were clearly still strong. In November, Kim Yong Nam sent a message of sympathy to Hassan Rouhani on a terrorist attack in the country, saying that "upon hearing the sad news that Kermanshah region located in the west of Iran was hit by earthquake, claiming heavy human and material losses, I express my deep sympathy and condolences to you and, through you, to the victims and their families. I hope that you and your government will recover from the consequences of this disaster at the earliest possible date and bring the life of the citizens in the disaster-stricken region to normal." The month after, Kim Jong Un received a message from Rouhani which extended "greetings to Kim Jong Un and the Korean people on the occasion of the New Year 2018" and hoped that "global peace, justice and equality would be ensured and violence removed in the New Year."

This year, 2018, relations couldn't be stronger. The imperialists have labeled countries like Iran, China, Saudi Arabia, and the DPRK"states of special concern for religious freedom," undoubtedly a fake label. At the end of January, in Tehran, the two countries signed a "2018-2021 memorandum on cooperation…in the fields of culture, arts, education, mass media, sports and youth" which was inked by Kang Sam Hyon, the DPRK's ambassador in

Tehran, and "the vice-chairman in charge of international affairs of Iran's Islamic cultural liaison organization" (KCNA, "DPRK, Iran sign memorandum," *Pyongyang Times*, Jan 27, 2018). The next month, February, the Iranian embassy in Pyongyang hosted "a reception...on the occasion of the birth anniversary of leader Kim Jong Il." Present at the reception was Kim Yong Dae, vice-president of the SPA Presidium, Thae Hyong Chol, president of Kim Il Sung University, "Kim Jong Suk, chairwoman of the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, [and] Ryu Myong Son, vice department director of the C.C., Workers' Party of Korea." Also, Seyed Mohsen Emadi, Iranian ambassador there and his staff members were there. In a speech, Emadi said that "historic relations between the two countries forged by their preceding leaders had been further strengthened thanks to Kim Jong Il," and he expressed the "will to continue mutual cooperation in line with the desire and aspiration of the two peoples." Kim Yong Dae added, in his speech that "the Korean people would as ever value the friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries forged in the joint struggle for independence against imperialism, sincerely wishing the Iranian people success in their struggle for ensuring regional peace and stability." The same month, Kim Yong Nam sent a "message of sympathy" to Rouhani, in "connection with a recent passenger plane crash in Iran, that claimed huge casualties," saying that he "expressed deep sympathy and condolences to the Iranian president and, through him, to the bereaved families of the deceased." Also that month, the Iranian embassy "hosted a reception at the Taedonggang Diplomatic Club...to mark the 39th anniversary of the victory in the Islamic revolution of Iran." Present at the reception was Thae Hyong Chol, president of Kim Il Sung University and chair of the DPRK-Iran Friendship Parliamentary Group, Ri Yong Chol, vice department director of the WPK's central committee, and Choe Hui Chol, along with other "officials concerned and diplomatic envoys of different countries and representatives of international organizations and military attaches of foreign embassies" in Pyongyang. Around the same time, Kim Yong Nam, "sent a message of greetings...to Hassan Rouhani...on the occasion of the 39th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic revolution of Iran," in which he noted that "after the victory in the revolution the Iranian people have achieved a lot of successes in the struggle to defend the gains of revolution and build a powerful state while repelling the ceaseless pressure and interference by the hostile forces." In the same message he expressed "the belief that the good ties of friendship and cooperation between the DPRK and Iran would grow stronger, wishing the Iranian president bigger success in his work for the country's development and stability and the people's well-being."

We then get to more recent news. Iran continues to resist imperialist efforts to isolate it, allying more with the Chinese revisionists, the Russian capitalists, and the socially democratic Syrians, while European imperialists work to appease the orange menace with new sanctions (Also see articles about a Russian firm re-developing Iranian oil fields, a trade zone between Russia and Iran, that Iran will not seek U$ permission to operate in the region, that Iran does not seek domination of any region, and there are efforts to expand Iran-China ties. The Bahrainis have even blamed the Iranians for discord in their country, using them as a scapegoat. Iran says that its main priority is to increase security in the region, as it maintains connections with nearby countries, and is about to inaugurate an "offshore project which will stop flaring gas in the Persian Gulf."Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei told the Syrian Minister of Awqaf (Religious Endowments) that "Syria is in the forefront of resistance against terrorism, and we are all responsible to support Syria's resistance. Honorable President Bashar al-Assad played a prominent role of being a great defender and warrior and is highly regarded by its nation and the region…the great powers [US, the Soviet Union, NATO, the Arabs and regional countries against Iran] do not necessarily achieve what they look for…This gives insight, hope and power to the nations. So if we and you and the rest of the resistance groups remain decisive in our decisions, the enemy will not be able to defeat us." The same was said in two articles in *SANA* here, here, and here). The Saudis have also been strongly aggressive, doing the errand work for the imperialists as they always do. With the full-throated occupation of part of Syria by the U$, as Stephen Gowans pointed out recently, the Iranians are right to call the U$ foolish, especially in light of Mike Pompeo, neo-con of the CIA who has taken the reins of the U$ State Department from oil man Tillerson, who some thought was "moderate" but actually just engaged in imperial diplomacy. At the same time, varied Iranian minister have survived an impeachment process in their parliament, the country is aiming to launch its first operational satellite next year, and the ICAPP (International Conference of Asian Political Parties), headquartered in the ROK, met in Tehran recently for its 29th meeting. Also there were reports of the Cuban ambassador meeting with Iranian officials, and efforts to increase exports from a refinery run by ROK in the country. The protests, which had some elements with U$ backing, are over, with a massive turnout favoring the government. The Iranian government, defiantly, has said that they will negotiate over their ballistic missiles (which do not have nuclear warheads), with Iranian Armed Forces spokesman Masoud Jazayeri saying that "the condition for negotiating Iran's missiles is the destruction of the nuclear weapons and long-range missiles of the United States and Europe," echoed by Rouhani saying that "We will negotiate with no one on our weapons…[our missiles] are defensive and are not designed to carry weapons of mass destruction, since we don't have any." This is while Iran has said it was ready for the U$ to quit the nuclear deal and opposes the U$ moving their embassy to the Zionists to Jerusalem, saying they will defend themselves if there is Zionist aggression.

At the same time, there has been some other news. For one there has been some victories, such as the British-drafted resolution on Yemen failing in the UN Security Council, or Rouhani being more relaxed when it comes to headscarves in the country. However, there have been some ruminations of developing a cryptocurrency in Iran to bypass U$ sanctions, which will only benefit the Iranian bourgeoisie. There have also been recent stories about the hidden workings of the British empire (in the past) in Iran and India, along with new findings about the clerical involvement in the CIA-backed coup in Iran against Mohammad Mossadegh or how "Operation Merlin" poisoned U$ intelligence on Iran. Most worrisome is an article in *Bloomberg* back in February (Golnar Motevalli and Arsalan Shahla, "Iran Orders Armed Forces to Sell All Energy, Business Assets," *Bloomberg News*, Feb 7, 2018) stating that:

> *Iran's armed forces…must divest from energy assets and other businesses to help save the Persian Gulf nation's economy, President Hassan Rouhani said. Armed forces…must withdraw from all their commercial holdings, Rouhani said Tuesday…"Not only the Social Security Organization but all government sectors, including banks, have to divest their business holdings, and this is the only way to rescue the country's economy,"*

> *Rouhani said. "Government officials, non-government institutions and the armed forces and others — everyone has to divest their commercial businesses."…Rouhani's government, now in its fifth year, has faced unprecedented scrutiny from ordinary Iranians frustrated that their living standards haven't improved since the nuclear deal…The government needs to reduce its dependence on crude as a source of official revenue and must boost contributions from taxes, Rouhani said…Iran also holds the world's largest proven reserves of natural gas. Paris-based Total SA signed a deal in July to develop part of the giant South Pars gas field, pledging $1 billion in investment. Total is the only major Western energy company so far to commit to investing in Iran since the easing of sanctions. Within the nation's energy industry, divestment will focus on downstream petroleum projects including refineries, petrochemical plants and storage facilities…The program will emphasize assets owned by the government or semi-government entities, and Iran will seek to attract foreign companies "with investment, know-how, and equipment"*

Now, this is troubling. Not because of the work conditions in the country for the proletariat or the supposed "mass and arbitrary detention" and tough "Internet censorship regime" that the CPJ (Committee to Protect Journalists) bemoans. Rather it is that moving away from such state assets is a form of privatization. The Tudeh Party of Iran, which is in exile and did not participate in the country's elections in the past or recently in 2016, Iran's communist party as you could call it, dislikes the current government. In a statement on March 1 of this year, they talk about "grand capitalism" in Iran and privatization of factories, which is connected to a statement in January in which they state that Iran has, currently a "system underpinned by neoliberal capitalist socio-economics that has destroyed the productive infrastructure of the country and has driven Iran to unprecedented levels of poverty and deprivation." Around the same time they released another statement saying that "the way to save Iran is not to replace one dictatorial regime with another kind of dictatorship and tyranny. Our people are striving for a national, popular and democratic republic." While I am a bit wary of Tudeh as it is an exile, and is not based in the country itself, I think they make good points about the economic system in the country, which is becoming more and more capitalistic.

With all of this, there is still no doubt that the Islamic Republic of Iran, as it currently stands, is resisting U$ imperialist aggression in the region. It is for this reason that the Koreans continue to support it, even though they do not desire a similar government in their country. For the years to come, the relations between the countries will remain strong unless the Iranian leadership capitulates to the imperialists and cuts off relations entirely to appease the capitalist poles of power. If that happens, that would be a sad day for the peoples of Iran and Korea.

Standing against Zionism: the DPRK's support for Palestinian liberation

The same year that the DPRK was founded, the murderous apartheid and Zionist state of "Israel" was created, and given sanction by the United Nations, which was then dominated by imperialist powers. For the years to come, the DPRK would stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their Palestinian comrades. In 1966, relations between the DPRK and Palestinian resistance fighters began, with a "solidarity meeting" held in April 2016 to honor 50 years of relations. While refusing to recognize the murderous Zionist apartheid state, calling it an "imperialist satellite," the DPRK has said that it "fully supports the struggle of the Palestinians to expel the Israeli aggressors from their territory and regain their right to self-determination" and has helped Palestine "in many areas, such as maternity or education" (Bruce E. Bechtol, Jr., "North Korea and Support to Terrorism: An Evolving History," *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol 3, No 2, Summer 2010; Moath al-Amoudi, "Is North Korea supplying arms to Palestinian factions?," *Al-Monitor*, Aug 22, 2016; Benjamin R. Young, "How North Korea has been arming Palestinian militants for decades," *NK News*, Jun 25, 2014; Samuel Ramani, "Why Did North Korea Just Threaten Israel?," *The Diplomat*, May 3, 2017; David Cenciotti, "Israeli F-4s Actually Fought North Korean MiGs During the Yom Kippur War," *Business Insider*, Jun 25, 2013; David Cenciotti, "An unknown story from the Yom Kippur war: Israeli F-4s vs North Korean MiG-21s," *The Aviationist*, Jun 25, 2013; Michael Freud, "Fundamentally Freund: When Israel fought North Korea," *Jerusalem Post* (opinion), Oct 7, 2014; Barak Ravid and AP, "Israel Demands World 'Respond Decisively' to North Korea Nuclear Test," *Haaretz*, May 25, 2009. Bechtol is part of the U$ Marine Corps command, so its not surprising he would write such drivel). Not only did the DPRK finance and hand "arms to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine," along with the PLO, and DFLP, through the 1970s and 1980s, but during the Yom Kippur War in 1973 (Juche 72), Koreans sent air support to defend the territory Syria along with 19 military advisers to Egypt (like the Cubans who also sent troops) and a MiG-21 squadron to Egypt, where, Zionist F-4s engaged them in a dogfight in the "skies south of Cairo" and the Koreans did very well. After the war, Kim Il-Sung met with Syrian and Egyptian ambassadors in Pyongyang, promising to give them assistance, including military aid, with the Egyptians reportedly rewarding "North Korea with missile technology and designs." This was coupled with the reported visit of George Habash, leader of the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) in September 1970 (Juche 59), along with providing weapons and financial support.

With such support in the past, there have been claims since then that the DPRK has sent weapons to Hezbollah through different "trafficking network[s]," helped build underground facilities for Hezbollah in 2003 (Juche 92), that 100 Hezbollah fighters "traveled to North Korea for a year of training," and that Hamas has ties with the DPRK or even "Islamic Jihad's armed wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades" having weapons from the former. Others, even those with a horrid imperialist viewpoint, admit that in the late 1980s, Palestinian resistance fighters, which they call "Palestinian terrorists," belonging to the "PLO and from Syrian and Libyan-backed groups" stopped being trained, claiming that training of Hezbollah began in years to come, especially in the 1990s and years after that, claiming that the DPRK backed all sorts of "terrorist" groups, as they call them (Bechtol claims that the DPRK trained those with the "Basque Spanish ETA, Palestinian Abu Nidal organization, Irish Republican Army [IRA], Italian Red Brigades, Japanese Red Army [JRA], Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines…[the] anti-Turkish Kurdish PKK group…[the] Tamil Tigers (LTTE)" and says that collaboration between the DPRK and Hezbollah began thanks to their supposed ties with the IRGC. While it makes sense that the DPRK would give arms to the IRA, along with the PKK, JRA, Italian Red Brigades, and Abu Nidal/Fatah helping the others just don't make sense, like the ETA, Moro Liberation Front, and LTTE, whom are bourgeois nationalist or reactionary forces showing this supposed conspiracy to be absurd). One recent article, in bourgeois anti-DPRK *38 North*, claimed that there was a "historical, and possibly continuing arms relationship between North Korea and non-state actors in the Middle East" like Hezbollah and Hamas, saying that Palestinian resistance fighters like a founding member of Fatah received training by the DPRK in the 1960s, but couched supposed current support by using words like"allegedly" and "reportedly." They admitted, however, that there was not "proof" that the weapons heading to Gaza in 2009 intercepted by IDF ("Israeli" Defense Forces) were from the DPRK, and if one goes with the assumption that these weapons were from there, they were "decades old…likely produced in 1988," reportedly coming through Iran (Andrea Berger, "North Korea, Hamas, and Hezbollah: Arm in Arm?," *38 North*, Aug 5, 2014; Vasudevan Sridharan, "Israel-Gaza Conflict: Hamas Turns to North Korea for Missile Supplies," *International Business Times*, Jul 17, 2014; Victor D. Cha and Gabriel Scheinmann, "North Korea's Hamas Connection: "Below" the Surface?," *The National Interest*, Sept 4, 2014; Reuters, "Israel: North Korea Supplying Weapons to Six Mideast States," *Haaretz*, Oct 4, 2008; AFP, "Israel: North Korea shipping WMDs to Syria," *The Daily Star*, May 10, 2010; Zachary Keck, "North Korea's Middle East Pivot," *The Diplomat*, Jul 29, 2014). Further undercutting the argument, *38 North* admitted, in the closing words of their article, "none of these postulations can be proven as fact, but as new details arise and other arms shipments bound for Hamas or Hezbollah are seized, they should be kept in mind." So, what was the point of this horrible article? Nothing, other than smearing the DPRK following in the words spewed by the empire's military establishment and Zionists talking about arms smuggling (claiming arms were sent to the fascists in Myanmar), talking about a "nefarious North Korean role" while admitting, as *The National Interest* did, "no smoking-gun evidence that North Korea assisted Hamas directly in constructing its tunnels, the evidence is very suggestive," showing the weakness of their argument. More likely than not, one could say that the weapons that *38 North* writes about may have come from Iran, with the DPRK sending them during the Iran-Iraq War, and some elements, possibly within the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) felt that it would be in Iran's interest to send weapons to Hamas and Hezbollah, meaning it was not state policy. Even the bourgeois publication, *The Diplomat*, admitted that "even though North Korea can no longer match its pro-Palestinian rhetoric with military support, the DPRK remains one of Israel's most strident international critics" (Samuel Ramani, "Why Did North Korea Just Threaten Israel?," *The Diplomat*, May 3, 2017; Damien McElroy, "North Korea denies reports of missile deal with Hamas," *The Telegraph*, Jul 29, 2014). As the foreign ministry of the DPRK said in June 2014, about claims it gave missiles to Hamas,"this is utterly baseless sophism and sheer fiction let loose by the US to isolate [us] internationally. Lurking behind this propaganda is a sinister intention of the US to justify its criminal acts of backing Israel. The US is working hard to deliberately link [us] to the so-called 'terrorist organisations' defined by it in a bid to divert the focus of international criticism to Pyongyang." We should take their words to heart and not make broad declarations that they are giving arms and support to Palestinian resistance groups.

The Zionists, not content with the "harsh and well-deserved criticism" tried to hurt "the DPRK's dignified social system" by allying with the ROK, and declaiming the nuclear weapons (without realizing their hypocrisy) of the DPRK, and not recognizing that "the Korean- and Palestinian people share many important things in common – their struggle against a foreign aggressor on their respective lands, freedom and sovereignty for the people" with both the peoples "of Korea and Palestine...forged together as brothers in arms against common imperialist foes." Even a self-defined Korean-American, Zavi Kang Engles, who holds Orientalist views on the DPRK, declaring in *Mondoweiss* that "North Koreans still suffer under a brutal regime, marked by poverty, starvation, and captivity" and that they have "relatives in North Korea, but I know nothing of them, nor if they're even still alive" posing it as some scary and forbidden place, in line with bourgeois media, wrote something similar back in June 2015:

> *As a Korean-American concerned about the influence of the United States on other countries, I've begun to wonder something:* ***do Korean people have more in common with Israelis, as the official story would have us believe, or with Palestinians?*** *In recent years, the Israeli government has been strengthening ties with the South Korean government, which is headed by the conservative President Park Geun-Hye, daughter of the former US-backed dictator Park Chung-Hee. Prominent government officials on both sides propagate a false narrative of kinship between Israel and South Korea, asserting economic and geopolitical similarities…The governments of South Korea and Israel have gone beyond mere words with concrete steps towards joint economic collaboration…Israel is also a major arms supplier to South Korea…These recent developments* ***are deeply unsettling*** *to those who understand realities in both places behind the political platitudes…at the same time, both the Korean and Palestinian people* ***saw their lands violently divided at the whim of imperialist interests****…the true parallel to ordinary Koreans and their history is not Israelis, but Palestinians…Both the Koreans and Palestinians also continue to* ***suffer the consequences of borders imposed and created by outside imperialist countries****, with the United States playing a significant role in both cases…While South Korea is a technologically and economically advanced country with a high standard of living, it is* ***still occupied by almost 30,000 US troops****, despite constant*

> *protests from Korean citizens. Furthermore, South Korea represents only half the fate of the Korean people who had been unified for hundreds of years and were only divided in 1948, a consequence of their country being used as a pawn in a proxy war…Though to outsiders, North and South Korea may now simply be two enemy nations, for many Koreans,* ***it's a recent division that literally hits home****…Of course, the suffering of Palestinians and Koreans cannot be conflated but, as the above facts attest,* ***the similarities between Palestinians and Koreans run far deeper than the shallow sentiments*** *expressed by Israeli and South Korean officials. It worries me, as a Korean-American, when I see the South Korean government* ***so eagerly align itself with Israel****, against its own constitution…If Park's administration acted according to the Korean constitution and adhered to the anti-colonial sentiments so many Koreans hold,* ***there is no doubt that they would call for an end to the Israeli occupation and work in solidarity with the Palestinians****…the more authentic, shared experiences of oppression and occupation between Koreans and Palestinians…Through solidarity actions such as participating in BDS and sharing the stories that elucidate our shared experiences of oppression,* ***we can actively work to dismantle these political entities that fail to represent our truths*** *in the interest of selective political and economic gains.*

There is also the case of Jindallae Safarini (also spelled Sapharíny), a girl of Palestinian descent, born in the DPRK in 1985, "thanks to the health advances of the country" and given her first name by Kim Jong-Il himself. Her parents, one of whom was a former Palestinian ambassador, not able to have any more children, and with the help of doctors, "they got Jindallae's mother to become pregnant," making Jindallae "Kim Jong Il's Palestinian foster daughter" and demonstrating the "love and care that Dear Leader Kim Jong Il showed for everyone" (Isaac Stone Fish, "The Palestinian flower of North Korea," *Foreign Policy*,Dec 5. 2012; GlobalPost, "Even a bad-boy dictator needs friends," *PRI*, Dec 2, 2014). As she noted in her interview with KCNA, she came back to the DPRK in 2005, went back to China, and felt she had to "do something good," after talking with her father, establishing the nonprofit Jindallae Children's Foundation in November 2012 to help children (which she says she "loves"), especially for "health services," in the DPRK, which she calls her "second homeland." While bourgeois media claimed they couldn't "find" her (they are bad at researching), there is a page on the website of United Family Healthcare in Beijing, clearly referring to her. It notes that she received a "medical Degree from the Peking University Health Science Center in 2008" the same university where she "completed her Master of Medicine in Obstetrics and Gynecology" in 2011 (Juche 100), that she "studied Mandarin at Beijing Language and Culture University," and that after completing her "residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology in the Peking University Health Science Center's Third Hospital," she jointed "Beijing United Family Hospital and Clinics as a Physician Assistant" in 2012 (Juche 101), and is currently "a full-time Obstetrician and Gynecologist."

In June 1986 (Juche 75), Kim Il Sung gave a speech to a committee of the people and the political bureau of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK)'s central committee. While he mainly talked on the subject of the non-aligned movement, endorsing it and calling it anti-interventionist, anti-imperialist, anti-war, and anti-colonialist, he also strongly condemned Zionists. He argued that Zionists and South African racists, along with "other stooges" are "shock forces" of imperialists, with the latter groups pursuing "the racist and expansionist policy of aggression." On one hand he said that South Africa's racist government pursued "the vicious policy of apartheid, of racial discrimination, and the policy of brutal repression" while he condemned Zionist occupation of Arab lands to create a "Great Zionist Empire" within the Middle East. In another breath, he declared that the "expansionist, aggressive schemes of the Israeli Zionists" must be foiled because "Zionism is a form of racism and colonialism," saying that the "Palestinian and other Arab people" have just cause to fight for the "restoration of land lost to them." This statement can be coupled with a June 1985 Special National Intelligence Assessment of the U$ Intelligence establishment, saying that while "active liberation movements" have declined, the DPRK has less ability for involvement, but still gives arms and training to PLO, which includes small number of advisers, artillery, multiple rocket launchers, antitank weapons, mortars, antiaircraft machine guns, and renewed pledges of support to Arafat with arms shipments. This was likely the case, at the time, and it shows the solidarity of the DPRK with Palestinian liberation.

Kim Il Sung's speech was not out of the ordinary. The DPRK has reportedly given arms to Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) in Gaza as an act in solidarity with armed struggle by Palestinians. Capitalists shout that the Koreans are supporting terrorism but the real terrorism comes from Zionist forces murdering innocent Palestinians in cold blood. Since Yassar Arafat of the PLO declared independence of Palestine in 1988 (Juche 77), the DPRK has recognized the State of Palestine, saying it covers the whole Zionist state and occupied territories, except for the Golan Heights, which the DPRK sees as part of Syria (North Korea: The Israeli Connection," *BreakingIsraelNews*, accessed Feb 7, 2018; Benjamin R. Young, "How North Korea has been arming Palestinian militants for decades," *NK News*, Jun 25, 2014; Samuel Ramani, "Why Did North Korea Just Threaten Israel?," *The Diplomat*, May 3, 2017). Arafat was reportedly a "frequent visitor to Pyongyang," visiting Kim Il Sung six times, with this Kim awarding Arafat the "Star of Palestine" in 1993 (Juche 82), showing the connection between Palestine and Korea. Around that same time, in November 1992 (Juche 81), as the *Times of Israel* claims, "three Israeli diplomats boarded a plane from Pyongyang to Tokyo," hoping they could "reverse their bitter decades-old enmity and embark on a new era of fruitful cooperation," dreaming of "setting up an Israeli mission in Pyongyang, and of persuading the reclusive regime to stop selling arms to Israel's enemies in the Middle East" (Raphael Ahren, "The curious tale of Israel's short-lived courtship of North Korea," Times of Israel, Aug 10, 2017). They further say that the diplomatic mission was disrupted by Mossad, meaning that "nothing tangible would come of the diplomats' project to bring Jerusalem and Pyongyang closer together" ans was cut short by "then-prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in early 1993, presumably due to US pressure" with some still lauding the effort. They further claim that some of leadership of the DPRK, along with a "Korean businessman," appeared to be ready to consider opening the country to the West" as they were suffering an economic crisis, claiming they received "a friendly welcome in Pyongyang," making them think that the country was open to rapprochement. Supporters claimed that if the effort had gone forward, "North Korea today would be a state like China" since some, reportedly, "in the leadership were ready to steer the country into a different, more pro-Western direction." Let's say this story was true. It could be the case based on the fact that the DPRK was in an economic crunch after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and seemed to lower its direct support for international causes, in terms of assistance, after that point. Even so, it seems fantastical. It could and likely is made-up propaganda created by the Zionists.

Instead, it is better to deal with the reality, that the DPRK has always supported the

> *…Palestinian people's right to self determination and the Palestinians people's rightful struggle against Zionism. President Kim Il Sung* ***had a close relationship with Yasser Arafat and the support for the Palestinian struggle was always supported by the DPRK by providing arms and aid****. After the Cold War the material support declined, but the DPRK have always condemned Israeli attacks and the DPRK is still today* ***supporting*** *the Palestinians people's struggle for national liberation. The DPRK was there to recognize the State of Palestine when it was proclaimed by the Palestine Liberation Organization. What many so called socialists, communists and anti-imperialists tend to forget is that the struggle against Zionism in Palestine and the Korean people's struggle against imperialism* ***is one and the same****. If we decide not to support one oppressed people's struggle against an oppressor and we let the imperialist oppressor wins, then we have failed the other oppressed people and helped their oppressor. The DPRK, Cuba, Syria, and Iran for example* ***are countries that always have supported the Palestinians people's struggle*** *but if we let these countries fall, then the Palestinians people's struggle will turn out even harder then what it is today if they won't have material nor political*

support by some…Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il supported the righteous struggle of the Palestinian people

Fast forward to the 2008-2009 conflict. During that time, the DPRK condemned the Gaza flotilla raid, doing the same during similar raids in in 2010 (Juche 99) and 2014 (Juche 103), rightly calling them crimes against humanity, angering the Zionists (North Korea: The Israeli Connection," *BreakingIsraelNews*, accessed Feb 7, 2018). Additionally, in December 2008 (Juche 97), the DPRK denounced "Israel's killing of unarmed civilians as a crime against humanity, a serious provocation against the Palestinians and other Arab people and an open challenge to the Middle East peace process." They were right to say that, without a doubt. In February 2017 (Juche 106), the DPRK sent a delegation to a "conference in the Islamic Republic of Iran in support of the Palestinian struggle" in Tehran called the 6th International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Intifada (Uprising). Many other countries across the world attended, with delegations from over 80 countries, including Bosnia, Syria, India, Malaysia, Lebanon, Libya, Algeria, Russia, China, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, and Iraq, to name a few, with groups like Hezbollah and Hamas also sending delegations. The conference was described in the

Pyongyang Times in late February (KCNA, "DPRK Supreme People's Assembly delegation visits Iran, attends meeting," *Pyongyang Times*, Feb 26, 2017):

> *Choe Thae Bok, speaker of the Supreme People's Assembly, paid an official visit to Iran, leading a delegation. He met Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, leader of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. He courteously conveyed the warm regards from Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un to the Iranian counterpart who expressed thanks for this and asked Choe to pass on his best wishes to the DPRK leader. Choe Thae Bok also met with the parliamentary leaders of Iran, Palestine, Niger, Malaysia and Madagascar and other figures. The DPRK delegation attended the 6th international conference for supporting the Palestinians which was held in Teheran on February 21-22. The meeting brought together parliamentary delegations from over 50 countries and about 700 personages including representatives of organizations for solidarity with Palestine. The participants discussed how to fight against Israel's occupation of Palestine and its expansion of Jewish settlements and how to promote international solidarity to support the Palestinians in their drive to win statehood. In the opening session Iran's supreme leader and parliamentary speaker made congratulatory remarks. Choe Thae Bok told the event that President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il had described the Palestinian issue as a sacred liberation struggle and a matter of life and death for the Palestinian people, adding that the great leaders had rendered material and moral assistance to the Palestinians' just cause since they rose up against Zionism. He stressed the need to grant the Palestinians the right to self-determination and to disallow the intervention of the US that overtly aids and abets Israel, in order to ensure peace in the Middle East and resolve the regional issue in a comprehensive and fair way. The DPRK will as ever strengthen militant solidarity with Iran, Palestine and other countries to reject all sorts of aggression, interference and inequality and to build a new independent*

> *world, he said. The meeting released a joint statement in support of the just cause of the Palestinian people.*

The same year, in April, the defense minister of the murderous Zionist apartheid state would say that the standoff between the DPRK and the murderous empire affected them. In response, a spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry of the DPRK, responded, saying that "Israel is the only illegal possessor of nukes in the Middle East under the patronage of the US," also arguing that the Zionist state is a "disturber of peace in the Middle East, occupier of the Arab territories and culprit of crimes against humanity" (KCNA, "Israeli defence minister denounced for smear campaign against DPRK," *Pyongyang Times*, Apr 30, 2017). They are undeniably right: just recent the IDF killed a Palestinian in cold blood, and hospitals in Gaza have had to shut down because of the deadly siege by the Zionists, the latter of whom have been destroying EU-built schools time and time again. The relationship between the Palestinian resistance and the DPRK has been occasionally reciprocated. For example, Mahmoud Abbas, PLO president, sent a greeting to the DPRK in August 2017, praising the "historic friendship" (evidenced by the embassy of the State of Palestine in the DPRK), wishing "the Korean people continued stability and prosperity; and that the historical friendly relations between Palestine and North Korea and their two peoples will continue to develop and grow," while he also sent a message the same day to the ROK (Shlomo, "Anyone Surprised? PLO Leader Abbas Sends Greeting to North Korea Dictator," *JTF News*, Aug 16, 2017; Algemeiner Staff, "Hamas Praises North Korea After Pyongyang Regime Threatens to 'Mercilessly Punish' Israel," *Algemeiner*, Apr 30, 2017; Samuel Ramani, "Why Did North Korea Just Threaten Israel?," *The Diplomat*, May 3, 2017; Gary Willig, "Abbas congratulates North Korean dictator on 'Liberation Day'," *Israel National News*, Aug 15, 2017). Another example in in April 2017 when Hamas condemned "the Israeli insult to Pyongyang and emphasizes that the occupation is the leader of evil." As one site favorable to the DPRK remarked, "the DPRK have, and will always, provide support in fields such as diplomatic, educational and military, to the Palestinian people in their righteous struggle for freedom and independence" while saying that the fact that "the DPRK is providing arms and trainings to liberation movements in the Middle East is very disturbing to the imperialists" although I would say that isn't specifically a fact.

There has been some support among the common Palestinians, whom may remember or recognize the "long history of warm relationship" between the Palestine and the DPRK. In late 2017, a Gaza strip restaurant displayed a poster showing "Kim Jong Un next to a North Korean and a Palestinian flag announces a special offer: an 80 percent discount to North Korean customers" which was meant to show gratitude that Kim Jong-Un criticized "President Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem, a city holy to Jews, Muslims and Christians, as the capital of Israel," as one restaurant owner, Raba, noted (Sofia Lotto Persio, "Who Likes North Korea? Kim Jong Un Finds Grateful Fans in Gaza," *Newsweek*, Dec 15, 2017). He also said that Kim "is not a Muslim, a Christian or an Arab, he's not even in the Middle East, but he is supporting us," and that he doesn't believe "Erdoğan's words." Another media outlet, connected with Russia's *RT*, interviewed the restaurant owner and others, with one frame of their video showing the poster:

مطعم رابعة
Coca

One Zionist claims that "Pyongyang regularly voices support for Hamas and the Palestinian Authority" (Michael Freud, "Fundamentally Freund: When Israel fought North Korea," Jerusalem Post (opinion), Oct 7, 2014; Otto Warmbier's family kept his Jewishness under wraps while North Korea held him hostage," Times of Israel, Jun 22, 2017). The perception of such support was so strong that family of Otto Warmbier, a citizen of the murderous empire, concealed he had a "Jewish background and identity," that he "became active with his campus Hillel at the University of Virginia (UVA)" and had even visited the Zionist state, where he was "given a Hebrew name," with his mother being Jewish while he was as well, indicating that he was perhaps a Zionist! Undoubtedly those in the DPRK likely recognized this, but if they had been told the whole truth, it may have been different. After all, Zionists are horrible, upholding an inherently "racist ideology" which promotes "segregation and ethnic cleansing," the foundation of the whole Zionist state, the same state which demands a PA takeover of Gaza, wanting "Hamas disarmed and rendered impotent, the PA it controls in charge." The ties between Korea and Palestine reiterated again and again in the media of the DPRK. In *Rodong Sinmun* there are 35 results for the term "Palestine." These include a speech by the DPRK permanent representative at an emergency meeting of the UN's Security Council on December 21, 2017, saying that

> *the status of Kuds [also called Jerusalem] remains so sensitive that it, for sure, should be solved fairly by means of regaining the national rights of the Palestinian people and striking a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East problem. The U.S. and Israel should bear full responsibility for all the consequences of tension and instability that will be entailed in the Middle East region owing to its reckless and highhanded act…My delegation avails itself of this opportunity to reiterate its support and encouragement to the struggle of Palestinian people retrieving their legitimate right to setting up the independent state with East-al-Quds as its capital and to the struggle of the Arab people for their cause of justice.*

Other articles in *Rodong Sinmun* quote Ri Jong Hyok, deputy to the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK and director of the National Reunification Institute, as saying to the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in later November 2017, "I would like to express unreserved support to and solidarity with the peoples in Asian countries including Iran, Syria and Palestine who are struggling to put an end to the interference of foreign forces and to defend the sovereignty of the nation," and greetings sent to the President of Palestine (also see here). Additionally, the Palestinian ambassador had a reception in Pyongyang in October of last year, with Ri Su Yong saying that "the DPRK government [is looking] to boost the militant friendship and solidarity between the peoples of the two countries" and that the "Korean people will as ever extend invariable support and solidarity to the Palestinian people in the just cause to put an end to the Israeli aggressors' occupation and retake the legitimate national rights including the founding of an independent state," similar to what Ri Young Ho said in February, Kim Jong Un at the beginning of the year, Kim Yong Nam in January. Other greetings were sent from Mahmoud Abbas to Kim Jong Un in October, August, and February of last year, while he also referred to the "friendly relations" with the DPRK, sent a floral basket (and another), and even a New Years card. In 2016, it was the same. The Palestinians sent floral baskets in December, September, August, and February, held receptions in October and April, and messages from Abbas (also see here) to which the Koreans replied with greetings (also see here), a messages (also see here, here, and here) from Kim Jong Un, a face-to-face meeting, along with honoring other anniversaries.

It can be said with confidence that relations between the DPRK and Palestine will be strong for years to come, while the Zionists try to "crack down" on BDS.

The “same trench of the anti-imperialist struggle”: DPRK’s solidarity with Syria

In 1963 (Juche 52), the Arab Socialist Party, more accurately called the Ba’athists, came to power. However, it was not until 1970 (Juche 59) that the first of the Assads came to power. Hafiz Assad would remain the country’s president from 1971 (Juche 60) to 2000 (Juche 89), followed by Abdul Halim Khaddam as an interim president, and Bashar Al-Assad after him from 2000 (Juche 89) to the present-day. As I wrote out in my previous post, Syria was (and is) undeniably a socially democratic state, especially after the Western-friendly reforms in the 2000s, making the IMF smile with glee, which was only partially reversed as a result of the imperialist attack on Syria beginning in 2011. Through all of this, the DPRK was an ally of the government, which, you could say, engaged in a national liberation struggle to oust imperialists, although this was not totally the case as the Ba’athists engaged in bourgeois Arab nationalism. Still, the role of the DPRK, which has, like Cuba, sent doctors abroad to countries such as Syria, is worth noting. On July 25, 1966 (Juche 55), the DPRK and Syria established diplomatic relations. This was celebrated in 2016 (Juche 105), in a solidarity meeting at the Chollima Hall of Culture in August, as “an epochal event and landmark in boosting the bilateral cooperative relations and the friendly ties between the peoples of the two countries (Ri Kyong Su, “Bonds of DPRK-Syria Friendship Developing in Common Struggle,” *Rodong Sinmun*, Jul 26, 2016; Rodong News Team, “Solidarity Meeting Held for Anniversary of Establishment of DPRK-Syria Diplomatic Ties,” *Rodong Sinmun*, Aug 10, 2016). The same article in *Rodong Sinmun* described the relations as one between comradely states (bolding is my emphasis):

> *The DPRK and Syria* ***have waged a common struggle in the same trench of the anti-imperialist struggle*** *to protect the sovereignty of the countries and global peace and security. This is a clear proof that the bilateral relations of friendship and cooperation forged and cultivated by the great leaders with much care remain very strong.* ***Though the old generation and century are replaced by the new ones, the DPRK-Syria friendship is steadily growing stronger true to the behests of the great preceding leaders****. The Syrian people are eal victory of the cause of the Juche revolution by upholding the Party’s Songun politics and line of simultaneously developing the two fronts in defiance of the U.S. imperialists’ moves to stifle the DPRK. The service personnel and people of the DPRK* ***send invariable support and firm solidarity to the Syrian government and pxpressing positive support and solidarity for the service personnel and people of the DPRK*** *in the struggle to bring earlier the*

final veople in their just struggle to beat back the invasion and terrorism by the hostile forces at home and abroad and ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. ***The DPRK government and people will as ever stand by the Syrian government and people in their joint struggle for independence against imperialism****.”*

Bourgeois scholars even recognize the connection, declaring that “since the 1960s, North Korea has sold arms and equipment to Syria, and provided other sorts of military-to-military assistance, such as training and technical assistance” (while spuriously claiming that the DPRK helped develop “Syria’s chemical weapons and ballistic missile programs”), the two countries have a “long history of military cooperation...[that] goes back many years,” and that their connections are “far deeper and more entrenched than many Middle East analysts realize” (Steve Mollman, “The war in Syria has been great for North Korea,” *Quartz*, Apr 19, 2017; From “North Korea and the World” project by the East-West Center and the National Committee on North Korea (NCNK); Jay Solomon, “North Korea’s Alliance with Syria Reveals a Wider Proliferation Threat,” *Washington Institute of Near East Policy*, Nov 2, 2017; Bruce E. Bechtol Jr, “North Korea and Syria: Partners in Destruction and Violence,” *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Sept 2015. For this section, pages 277, 278, 279, 280, 284, 285, 287 of his bourgeois anti-communist article are used). They also state that Syria is one of the few countries in the world which “established diplomatic relations with North Korea, but not South Korea” in the post-Cold War environment. A major watershed moment in 1relations between the two countries was the sending of a contingent of 25 pilots from the DPRK to Syria during the war of 1967 (Juche 56), assisting the Syrian air force by defending the “airspace over Damascus,” called the “Six Day War” or called “an-Naksah,” meaning “the setback” in Arabic (“North Korea and the World” project by the East-West Center and the National Committee on North Korea (NCNK); Bruce E. Bechtol Jr, “North Korea and Syria: Partners in Destruction and Violence,” *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Sept 2015; Alexandre Mansourov, “North Korea: Entering Syria’s Civil War,” *38 North*, Nov 25, 2013; Franz-Stefan Gady, “Is North Korea Fighting for Assad in Syria?,” *The Diplomat*, Mar 24, 2016; Jay Solomon, “North Korea’s Alliance with Syria Reveals a Wider Proliferation Threat,” *Washington Institute of Near East Policy*, Nov 2, 2017). This was a war fought, between June 5 and 10th, between a coalition of Arab states such as Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, which were assisted by Algeria, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq, fighting against the Zionists for 132 hours and 30 minutes, a little less than 6 days, with the war fought on the Syrian side for the whole time, and shorter on the Egyptian and Jordanian fronts. While Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion of the Zionist state feared that “unless the US and USSR are coming much nearer to each other and stop sending arms to the Arabs – I am afraid there will be no peace in the Middle East,” with “peace” meaning room for Zionist expansion, the result of the war was large land grabs by the Zionists in the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula (which they gave up), the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, with claims the war showed “Arab weakness” and Zionist strength (leading to Zionist “pride”), claimed “anti-Jewish” behavior in Arab countries after the war, and others claiming that the Soviets “instigated” the war, which is also questionable (Isabella Ginor, Excerpt from “The Cold War’s Longest Cover Up: How and Why the USSR Instigated the 1967 War,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal* Vol 7., No

3, Sept 2003, reprinted on a Zionist website; “Six Day War: impact on Jews in Arab Countries,” sixdaywar.co.uk, accessed Feb 25, 2018; Judy Maltz, “The Rise – and Rise – of French Jewry’s Immigration to Israel,” *Haaretz*, Jan 13, 2015; Daphna Berman, “The 40th Anniversary of the Six-Day War / Rate of Return,” *Haaretz*, Jun 1, 2007). With this, it is worth remembering that before the war, on May 29, the commander of the UN force noted that “two Israel[i] aircraft violated...[the] air space over Gaza” of the United Arab Republic (renamed the Arab Republic of Egypt in 1971), with skirmished between all involved, the Egyptians arguing that the Zionists committed “treacherous aggression” and were trying to block the Suez canal. In November 1967, the UN Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 242, calling for the “withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict,” and the termination “of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force,” among other aspects.

What about the war itself, which has a dedicated chapter in the history of the U$ State Department? For one, some advisers admitted that “Israelis had jumped off on minimum provocation in a very purposeful effort to deal with air power and then go after the UAR armies...assembled in the Sinai” meaning that the Zionists struck first in an effort of aggression (one document says “this is an Israeli initiative“), with LBJ even seeing the war was “a mistake by the Israelis,” telling them that directly. Other documents note that the Soviets wanted hostilities to cease, putting to bed the myth that they “instigated” hostilities by siding with/supporting the Arabs, while noting that Zionist aggression had occurred. As an assessment at the end of the war of Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East acknolwedged, “we do not believe that the Soviets planned or initiated the Middle Eastern crisis...[they] were developments which the USSR did not desire, initially did not foresee and, later, could not forestall.”

The cables to show that the murderous empire sided with the Zionists, with comment by Walt Rostow that “so long as the war is roughly moving in Israeli’s favor, I believe we can shorten it by getting at the substance of a settlement at the earliest possible time,” ringing their hands about “Arab provocations,” and efforts to split the states against the Zionists apart, while they called for “restraint” and were surprised that the Soviets called them participators in the Zionist aggression, which was evident, with support for Zionist “self-defense” as another example, without a doubt,while they denied direct involvement. With the imperialist warplanes staying away, there was also concern about the “large American and foreign community in Jordan,” with Arabs in the UN feeling “that the USSR had let them down,” push for the Johnson administration to be more Zionist, with some saying that “the continuing delay in convening the Security Council is very much in Israel’s interest so long as Israeli forces continue their spectacular military success...The delay serves Israel, damages the Soviet position and still further discredits the United Nations” which almost sounds like an endorsement, declaration that “the destruction of Nasser as an effective Pan-Arabist is fundamental to our hopes for gaining a reasonably quick settlement...with Nasser remove...the Middle East would probably be relieved...of the intense and effective extremism that has been constantly stimulated by the Nasser charisma and the UAR political propaganda apparatus,” and saying that “Israel has no intention of going on to Damascus. It is trying physically to silence the Syrian gun positions but they are well emplaced, almost impervious to air attacks, and have to be taken by ground assault." The empire was concerned, that after the war, "to the average Arab there is no doubt that we [the empire] would by this time be militarily involved on Israel's side if she were being attacked by Arabs as she is now attacking them" and said that "the Syrians reluctantly had agreed to a cease fire only after the Israelis had done so. The Syrians then engaged in a wholesale destruction of the Israeli side of the line," with the Soviets breaking diplomatic relations with the Zionists after the war.

In a three-part interview, Norman Finkelstein talked with with the progressive news outlet, The Real News, about the 1967 war. In the first part he argued the "the big question for Israel in 1967 was not whether they were going to prevail over the Arabs...Their big concern was, how would the US react?"with the Zionists knowing that "Nasser wasn't going to attack" and the "the war was over, really literally, it was over in about six minutes" since after the Zionists "flattened the Egyptian Air Force...then the ground troops had no air support. It was over. The only reason it lasted six days is because they wanted to grab territory," with the Soviets warning the nearby Arab states that the Zionists would attack. Additionally, Finkelstein argued that "Palestinian commando raids, mostly supported by the Syrian regime" occurred because "of the Israeli land grab in the demilitarized zones" with uncalled for aggression by the Zionists, with the U$ not opposing the aggression but not supporting it openly. In the second part he argued that the war "knocked out Nasser, knocked out radical Arab nationalism, finished it off, which the U.S. wanted to finish off also," adding that after the war the Zionists popularized the "image of the Jewish fighter" with the Zionists shocked by the war in 1973 (Juche 62) because "had internalized all the racist [thinking that] Arabs can't fight...[and] didn't believe that the Arabs can mount an attack on Israel." In the final part of the interview, Finkelstein argued that the U$-backed "peace process" never meant to end Zionist occupation of illegally occupied territories of the Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza.

Assistance by the DPRK during the war was followed by conventional weapons such as "rifles, artillery, mortars, machine guns, ammunition, bombs, armored vehicles, anti-tank weapons, and multiple rocket launchers" given to the Syrian military by the Koreans over the years, which bourgeois analysts sneer at without question. What one Spanish-speaking comrade named Fekerfanta, said is relevant here (A Spanish-speaking comrade named Fekerfanta, "Proletarian Nationalism of North Korea," *From Pyongyang to Havana*, Aug 8, 2013):

> *Since the creation of present-day Syria, North Korea has shown great solidarity with the country, especially on two issues of great importance, the first, the development of agriculture, lending all its heavy agricultural technology on the state lands of Syria…and in the development of energy.*

In 1970 (Juche 59), the DPRK showed its continual strong support for Syria. 200 tank crewmen, 140 missile technicians, and 53 pilots were dispatched to the country (Bruce E. Bechtol Jr, “North Korea and Syria: Partners in Destruction and Violence,” The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis, Vol. 27, No. 3, Sept 2015; Alexandre Mansourov, “North Korea: Entering Syria’s Civil War,” 38 North, Nov 25, 2013). Around the same time, conventional weapons such as rifles, artillery, rocket launchers, anti-tank weapons, and tanks were supplied to Syria. In 1973 (Juche 62), 30 pilots from the DPRK participated in the October (liberation) war, which is called the “Yom Kippur War” by the Zionists, led by Arab states of Syria and Egypt, with the latter states supported by expeditionary forces of the Saudis, East Germans, Pakistanis, Kuwaitis, Iraqis, Libyans, Tunisians, Algerians, Moroccans, and Cubans, while being supported by the Soviets. These pilots aided the Syrian air force, likely directly fighting the Zionists as they flew Egyptian and Syrian jet fighters, with KPA (Korean People’s Army) Chief of General Staff Kim Kyok Sik coordinating this assistance (Jay Solomon, “North Korea’s Alliance with Syria Reveals a Wider Proliferation Threat,” Washington Institute of Near East Policy, Nov 2, 2017; Franz-Stefan Gady, “Is North Korea Fighting for Assad in Syria?,” The Diplomat, Mar 24, 2016; “North Korea and the World” project by the East-West Center and the National Committee on North Korea (NCNK);Bruce E. Bechtol Jr, “North Korea and Syria: Partners in Destruction and Violence,” The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis, Vol. 27, No. 3, Sept 2015; Geoffrey Cain, “Syria’s other ally: North Korea,” GlobalPost (reprinted in Salon), Sept 9, 2013; Alexandre Mansourov, “North Korea: Entering Syria’s Civil War,” 38 North, Nov 25, 2013). Sik would later help coordinate “post-war rehabilitation of Syrian armed forces in the mid-1970s” which included the sending of 40 MiG pilots and 75 air force instructors in 1975 (Juche 64) and 1976 (Juche 65), with these individuals providing training, along with sending its artisans to “build a commemorative museum in Cairo” and selling 300 “recoilless guns” to Syria in 1978 (Juche 67), to give an example. Into the 1980s, the DPRK provided Syria with “military instructors and arms” including air defense systems, and also “helped upgrade hundreds of Soviet-made T-54 and T-55 tanks in service with the Syrian Arab Army,” to give some examples. Such acts of solidarity with Syria are not surprising. As a top adviser to the ROK president, Moon Chung-in, noted in 2007 (Juche 96), the DPRK “sees Israel as an invader and has been willing to support military action by the Arabs that promotes Palestinian liberation. Solidarity between North Korea and the Arabs has been bolstered by maintaining security relations, which go far beyond diplomatic rhetoric (Jay Solomon, “North Korea’s Alliance with Syria Reveals a Wider Proliferation Threat,” Washington Institute of Near East Policy, Nov 2, 2017). This should be celebrated, rather than condemned, which Liberal Zionists want us to do.In the 1980s, the DPRK continued its strong support. During the 1982 (Juche 71) uprising of Islamic reactionaries, some claimed they operated “122 millimeter truck-mounted multiple rocket launchers" (Franz-Stefan Gady, “Is North Korea Fighting for Assad in Syria?,” The Diplomat, Mar 24, 2016; Bruce E. Bechtol Jr, “North Korea and Syria: Partners in Destruction and Violence,” The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis, Vol. 27, No. 3, Sept 2015; Alexandre Mansourov, “North Korea: Entering Syria’s Civil War,” 38 North, Nov 25, 2013). Whether that was true or not, even bourgeois analysts have to admit that special operations forces were deployed to Syria to “help train the conventional Syrian Arab Army and its allies in insurgency tactics," especially during the Lebanese Civil War in 1982 (Juche 71), with 25 of them reportedly killed by the IDF, and reportedly varying military instructors were sent through the 1980s and into the early 1990s.

Whether that was true or not, even bourgeois analysts have to admit that special operations forces were deployed to Syria to "help train the conventional Syrian Arab Army and its allies in insurgency tactics," especially during the Lebanese Civil War in 1982 (Juche 71), with 25 of them reportedly killed by the IDF, and reportedly varying military instructors were sent through the 1980s and into the early 1990s. The U$ Intelligence community acknowledged this in their June 1985 (Juche 74) Special National Intelligence Assessment saying that the DPRK had an unknown number of advisers and gave the country gunpowder, claiming that "most military shipments to PLO routed through Syria," which, if true, would be another effort of support for Palestinian liberation. This was, as some acknowledged, part of a "mutually beneficial relationship" between the DPRK and Syria, which included some Syrian military officers educated at educational institutions inside the DPRK, such as Kim Il Sung Military University which was continued until 2013 (Juche 102), and likely is still an occurrence. Reportedly, Kim Jong Il even followed, "with interest" the careers of several general officers from Syria who has graduated from the university. Then, we come to the 1990s. With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Juche 80), both Syria and the DPRK, which were not "client states" as anti-communist analysts claim but were independent countries, were hit by a loss of "strategic support that the Soviets had provided them," forcing both to reportedly "abandon the dream of "strategic parity" with Seoul and Tel Aviv," adopting a formula of "strategic deterrence" instead (Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea: Entering Syria's Civil War," 38 North, Nov 25, 2013). Additionally, as the DPRK refused overtures by the Zionists to "establish diplomatic relations," the Syrians "rejected past ROK attempts to normalize relations." As such, the two countries continued to support each other, with Pak Ui Chun,the foreign minister of the DPRK, serving as the Ambassador of the DPRK to Syria in the early 1990s, with secretaries of the WPK, Kim Yang Gon and Kim Yong Il, receiving senior officials from Syria on "numerous occasions." The relations were so strong that in January 1997 (Juche 86), Hafez al-Assad, President of Syria, stated that the position of Syria "recognizing only the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the Korean peninsula" would be unchanged. A few years later, in October 1999 (Juche 88), the still-standing October Liberation War Panorama Hall opened in Syria. Within it is the Tishreen War Panorama (finished in 1998), titled officially "Operations for the liberation of Kunaittiru City during the October War," which measures 15 x 125 m, which was painted by varying artists of the Mansudae Art Studio: O Gwang Ho, Ri Gap ll, Ham Gwan Sop, Ham Gun Nam, Ju Gwang Hyok, Yun Hong Chol, Ri Yong Nam, Jang Chi Bok, Hong Gyong Nam, Ri Jong Gap, An Dok Yong, Jang Chol Ho, Im Gon ll, Ri Jae Su, Choi Song Sik, Mun Su Chol, Cha Yo Sang, Mun Dok Gi, Jang Sung Ho, and Jin Chol Jin.

As the new century began, the relationship remained strong. In June 2000 (Juche 89) and July 2002 (Juche 91), Kim Yong Yam, President of the SPA Presidium, traveled to Syria, just has he had done in July 1992 as Foreign Minister, showing that it is undoubtedly true that "many senior DPRK leaders have either visited Syria over the past two decades or worked closely with its government" as was written in 2013 (Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea: Entering Syria's Civil War," 38 North, Nov 25, 2013. In 2001, he writes, the government of the DPRK signed three long-term loan agreements with the Kuwaitis "to finance the development and modernization of basic infrastructure in North Korea"). In January 2002 (Juche 91), in a measure of solidarity, vice-minister of the Syrian foreign ministry, Suleyman Hadad, went to Pyongyang and told the vice-President of the SPA Presidium, Yang Hyong Sop, that "the Syrian people would stand firm on the side of the heroic Korean people" with a statement issued not long after by the Syrian government saying the U$ was the real "axis of evil" and expressed "full support for the DPRK's stance." This shows that the anti-imperialist positions go both ways. The following year, 2003 (Juche 92), after Syria was accused of "providing Saddam's armies with military supplies, following the US invasion of Iraq," Rodong Sinmun urged the U$ to stop its "anti-Syria campaign" and later that year the government of the DPRK "dismissed the U.S. decision [to impose sanctions on Syria] as a product of its desperate moves to interfere in the internal affairs of Syria and destroy its economic system from A to Z." Also that year, after the DPRK announced it was withdrawing from the Non-Profileration Treaty (NPT), a leading member of the Syrian Arab Socialist Baath Party, Wolid Hamdoun, who headed the Syrian Arab-Korea Friendship Association, and the director general of the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), Gaji al Dib, told the ambassador of the DPRK that "Syria and the DPRK are standing in the same trench of the struggle against the U.S. vicious and aggressive offensives and expressed full support to the principled stand and decision of People's Korea." In the years to come, the relationship remained a strong one. In 2004 (Juche 93), some claimed that a "a dozen Syrian technicians" were killed in an explosion at the train station in Ryongchon, near the Chinese border which they thought was an apparent assassination attempt to kill Kim Jong Il ("Syria and North Korea: A Real Axis of Evil," The National Interest, Sept 4, 2013; Bruce E. Bechtol Jr, "North Korea and Syria: Partners in Destruction and Violence," The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis, Vol. 27, No. 3, Sept 2015). Whether that happened, the fact is that this shows a strong relationship. Then there's the famed military strike in September 2007 (Juche 96) by the Zionists, which they have never officially confirmed. In this act of military aggression, which they called "Operation Orchard," the Zionists dropped 17 tons of explosives on a supposed "secret nuclear reactor" in Syria, near Al Kibar, reportedly killing 10 technicians from the DPRK, with claims that the latter helped build and/or supply this supposed "gas-cooled, graphite-moderated" reactor (the IAEA said it "appeared" to look like a reactor which isn't reassuring), which some claimed looked like the reactor in Yongbyong (Tak Kumakura, "North Koreans May Have Died in Israel Attack on Syria, NHK Says," Bloomberg News, Apr 27, 2008; Samuel Ramani, "Why Did North Korea Just Threaten Israel?," The Diplomat, May 3, 2017; Victor D. Cha and Gabriel Scheinmann, "North Korea's Hamas Connection: "Below" the Surface?," The National Interest, Sept 4, 2014; Israel used 17 tons of explosives to destroy Syrian reactor in 2007, magazine says," Times of Israel, Sept 10, 2012; Jay Solomon, "North Korea's Alliance with Syria Reveals a Wider Proliferation Threat," Washington Institute of Near East Policy, Nov 2, 2017; "Syria and North Korea: A Real Axis of Evil," The National Interest, Sept 4, 2013; Gregory L. Schulte, "North Korea and Syria: A Warning in the Desert," YaleGlobal Online, Apr 28, 2010; Geoffrey Cain, "Syria's other ally: North Korea," GlobalPost (reprinted in Salon), Sept 9, 2013; Elizabeth Shim, "North Korea troops fighting in Syrian civil war, delegate says," UPI, Mar 22, 2016; Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea: Entering Syria's Civil War," 38 North, Nov 25, 2013; Gary Samore, and Bernard Gwertzman, "A Syria-North Korea Nuclear Relationship?," Council of Foreign Relations, Sept 19, 2007; Steve Mollman, "The war in Syria has been great for North Korea," Quartz, Apr 19, 2017). While this incident is broadly still shrouded in mystery, it does seem evident that the strike happened, although it cannot be confirmed if they hit a nuclear reactor or another building as the accounts of the incident usually come from sources favorable to Zionists, and that it was green-lighted by the U$, with Mossad reportedly breaking into the "Vienna home of Syria's Atomic Agency director," finding photos of the building which reportedly "showed

North Korean workers in the facility," with these findings reportedly confirmed by the U$ intelligence community. If it really was a reactor, then this was not "one of the greatest acts of nuclear proliferation in history" as Zionists claimed, but was rather an act of cowardly aggression, showing that the Zionists were afraid their nuclear deterrent would be ruined. The Spanish-speaking comrade named Fekerfanta, who I mentioned earlier, accepts that it was a nuclear reactor, but what he writes is worth repeating (A Spanish-speaking comrade named Fekerfanta, "Proletarian Nationalism of North Korea," *From Pyongyang to Havana*, Aug 8, 2013):

> *The story is simple, Syria was building a nuclear power plant with the help of North Korea. This, it seems, did not please Israel very much, so with US authorization, it launched an air strike on Syrian sovereign land, destroying the power station. In this attack, 10 North Korean workers died. Imagine if it had been the other way around, if North Korea had bombed a nuclear facility in another country, the one that had been set up, right?*

That is something the DPRK haters don't consider. Such arguments which put the situation in a different context is always an important way of debunking lies about countries which are under attack by imperialists. Fast forward to 2010 (Juche 99). That year, the foreign minister of the Zionist state, Avigdor Lieberman, declared, when visiting Japan in May that Iran, Syria, and the DPRK were an "axis of evil" (echoing Bush II's old rhetoric), declaring that they "pose the biggest threat to world security because they are building and spreading weapons of mass destruction." This was coupled with an upon that year published in a Yale University comment blog, declaring that "to prevent further proliferation, North Korea's activities need to be exposed, penalized, and disrupted" ("Syria and North Korea: A Real Axis of Evil," The National Interest, Sept 4, 2013; Gregory L. Schulte, "North Korea and Syria: A Warning in the Desert," YaleGlobal Online, Apr 28, 2010). Of course, the latter is what the imperialists want without question. The former could more accurately be applied to the U$ since it is the largest arms dealer in the world. With that, some still have the galls to call for gun control, while this racket remained unchecked! In 2011 (Juche 100), the situation changed. The imperialist attack on Syria began. You could say that the protests had "good roots" originally, but that isn't even assured. What is clear is that the DPRK replenished the lost equipment of the Syrian government with T-55 tanks, "trucks, RPGs and shoulder-fired missiles," if one believes the varied claims in bourgeois media (North Korea: The Israeli Connection," BreakingIsraelNews, accessed Feb 7, 2018; Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea: Entering Syria's Civil War," 38 North, Nov 25, 2013. One article Krishnadev Calamur, "Who Are Syria's Friends And Why Are They Supporting Assad?," Reuters, Aug 28, 2013) also says that "Moscow has long-standing strategic and financial interests in Syria...China and Syria have close trade links...Iran has few allies in the Arab world and its most important one is Syria). If one discounts these, it is still the fact that Kim Jong Un "joined the Assad government [not literally] to actively fight against the anti-government rebels in Syria, many of whom are affiliated with Al-Qaeda," with the

DPRK's government saying it is a duty to "help a legitimate sovereign government in the fight against international terrorism in Syria."

Then we come to 2013 (Juche 102). That year, Bashar Al-Assad, President of Syria, cited the war in Korea, along with other aggression in "Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq" as the mainstay of U$ policy, while also recalling that "American policy in South America where it instigated military coups and caused the deaths of millions; tens of governments were toppled as a result of American policy." In terms of the relationship between the two countries, in August, Kim Yong Nam met Syrian Prime Minister Wael Nader Al Halqi in Tehran, with the latter saying "Syria regards the DPRK as a military power with tremendous military force and a country of comrades-in-arms struggling against the common enemy" while others recognized that the DPRK has time and time again "expressed its support for Syria, condemning foreign forces and calling for the expulsion of the country" (A Spanish-speaking comrade named Fekerfanta, "Proletarian Nationalism of North Korea," From Pyongyang to Havana, Aug 8, 2013; Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea: Entering Syria's Civil War," 38 North, Nov 25, 2013; "Syria and North Korea: A Real Axis of Evil," The National Interest, Sept 4, 2013; Julian Ryall, "Syria: North Korean military 'advising Assad regime'," The Telegraph, Jun 6, 2013; Jonathan Spyer, "Behind The Lines: Assad's North Korean connection," Jerusalem Post, Nov 2, 2013; Steve Mollman, "The war in Syria has been great for North Korea," Quartz, Apr 19, 2017; Adam Taylor, "Are North Koreans fighting in Syria? It's not as far-fetched as it sounds," Washington Post, Mar 25, 2016; Bruce E. Bechtol Jr, "North Korea and Syria: Partners in Destruction and Violence," The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis, Vol. 27, No. 3, Sept 2015; Geoffrey Cain, "Syria's other ally: North Korea," GlobalPost (reprinted in Salon), Sept 9, 2013; Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea: Entering Syria's Civil War," 38 North, Nov 25, 2013). That same year there were claims by the notoriously unreliable Syrian Observatory of Human Rights (SOHR), an one-person outfit of Rami Adel Rahman founded in May 2006 which is based in the "two-bedroom Coventry home of Syrian immigrant Rami Abdel Rahman" with unknown sources on the "ground in Syria" whose "director" admits that he is "not a media organization," that officers of the DPRK who spoke Arabic were deployed around Aleppo, reportedly playing a key role in the battle for Qusair, a symbolic victory for the government, while others ringed their hands with false claims about they claimed was a "Pyongyang-Damascus axis." It should give comrades pause that *KCNA* is saying that this is misinformation floated by foreign media, meaning that one should not accept this just because it is in bourgeois media, not at all.Even if you took from Kim Jong Un's meeting with a Syrian government delegation that year that the DPRK would support Syria, which is the only "Mediterranean nation to maintain diplomatic relations with North Korea without formally recognizing the South," or supposedly "carefully read" the denial by the DPRK foreign ministry to think that "North Korean arms and military advisors may indeed be engaged on the battlefields of the Syrian civil war," it is better to stick with the facts, not unsubstantiated claims. As such, it is clear that Syria and the DPRK support each other, with Kim Jong Un exchanging "personal letters on ten different occasions," more than any other leader of a foreign country, including the Chinese! Both countries face a "an acute security dilemma" as they work to force foreign troops out of areas which are their homelands, with both countries with a "long history of extensive bilateral military-to-military ties."

In 2014 (Juche 103) relations were strengthened without a doubt. That year, Syria asked the DPRK to "help monitor its presidential elections" which they probably thought of as an honor, as this is an important duty for any country (Steve Mollman, "The war in Syria has been great for North Korea," *Quartz*, Apr 19, 2017). Also, the DPRK was one of the 20 countries which urged the "independent international commission of inquiry on human rights in Syria" probe into "grave human rights violations committed by terrorists in Syria." Also, the ambassador of the DPRK, Jang Myong Ho, to Syria, expressed that he was "confident the Syrian people and army will achieve stability and security in the country," the Syrian Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Mohammad Amer al-Mardini, discussed, with Jang Myong Ho, possible "cooperation prospects in higher education and scientific research," and Syrian Prime Minister, Dr. Wael al-Halaqi, said that both of their countries have been "standing up to the US, imperialism, and Zionism for decades, facing attempts to control them, destabilize them, and interfere in their internal affairs." Additionally, apart from the minister of the DPRK received by Bashar Al-Assad himself, receiving a delegation from the DPRK and accepting the credentials of the ambassador, there were discussions about cooperation in varying areas, including in agriculture, there were calls to bolster economic ties between the two countries, and the signing of various agreements. With that, the sentiment of common solidarity was expressed.

We then get to 2015 (Juche 104). Apart from publishing a timeline that listed September 9th as the day in 1948 (Juche 37) that the DPRK was founded, or the day in 1973 (Juche 62) that Cuba cut "diplomatic relations with the Israeli occupation," Syria dedicated a park in Damascus to Kim Il Sung in September (Elizabeth Shim, "North Korea troops fighting in Syrian civil war, delegate says," *UPI*, Mar 22, 2016; Steve Mollman, "The war in Syria has been great for North Korea," *Quartz*, Apr 19, 2017; "Syria names park in capital after N Korea founder," Al Jazeera, Aug 31, 2015). The park, which is 9,000-square-metres, lies "in the southwestern Damascus district of Kafr Souseh," with the ceremony to name the park held on the 70th anniversary of the formation of the WPK and the DPRK, with Syrian officials praising Kim Il Sung and the government of the DPRK. At the ceremony where the park was opened, which was accompanied by a monument to Kim Il Sung, a member of the Al-Baath Arab Socialist Party and had of the Syrian-Korean friendship association, Fairouz Moussa, spoke about the relations between the two countries, as did Deputy Foreign and Expatriates Minister of Syria, Fayssal Mikdad, and the Ambassador of the DPRK in Damascus, Jang Myong Ho. The same year, the DPRK supported Syria's fight against terrorism, while Syria affirmed "support for peacefully settling the situation on the [Korean] peninsula and keeping away the specter of war that jeopardizes regional and international peace and security," voiced support for the statement of the DPRK, Bashar Al-Assad emphasizing that Syria and the DPRK "are being targeted because they are among those few countries which enjoy real independence and because they stand in one ditch against the very enemy that seeks to change the national identity of their peoples," Assad naming Tammam Ahmad Suleiman as "Syria's ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)" and Syria congratulating Cuba on reaching an "agreement with the United States that lifts the blockade imposed on it," while renewing he call to "lift and stop all unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria and the peoples of other countries such as DPRK, Venezuela and Belarus."

In a great rebuttal of the claim that Cuban or DPRK troops were in the country, Syrian Information Minister Omran al-Zoubi said in an interview with the Syrian Ikhbariya TV, that "Cuban or North Korean forces [are not] on the Syrian soil" because "Russia's presence is more than sufficient." This is probably the best rebuttal of such lies. Additionally, a minister of the DPRK was received, economic support of the latter of Syria was discussed, and Syria's support of the DPRK was also emphasized. Additionally, there were calls to enhance youth ties, have a program for cultural cooperation, and have stronger agricultural cooperation between the two countries. This all goes back to the idea that both countries have a common enemy, which can be countered with stronger relations, which is undeniably the case. In 2016 (Juche 105), strong relations between the DPRK and Syria continued abound. Echoing the claims of SOHR years earlier, the delegation of the Free Syrian Army, backed by the Saudis, claimed that "two North Korean units are there [in Syria], which are Chalma-1 and Chalma-7," with one bourgeois analyst having to admit that "there is no hard evidence that North Korean troops are on the ground fighting alongside the pro-Assad forces or that Pyongyang is currently providing material support to the Syrian government...the evidence is not conclusive...there are no publicly accessible pictures of North Korean soldiers on the ground and no reports of North Korean soldiers killed, captured, or wounded in Syria," showing the weakness of their case. Hence, their claims about units from the DPRK in Syria are laughable since they are so weak they are like a line of dominoes ready to be pushed over with the tap of one's finger (Franz-Stefan Gady, "Is North Korea Fighting for Assad in Syria?," *The Diplomat,* Mar 24, 2016; Elizabeth Shim, "North Korea troops fighting in Syrian civil war, delegate says," *UPI*, Mar 22, 2016; Adam Taylor, "Are North Koreans fighting in Syria? It's not as far-fetched as it sounds," *Washington Post*, Mar 25, 2016). The relationship between Syria and the DPRK was as strong as ever. In August, The same month, Tammam Sulaiman and other officials from the Syrian embassy visited "the Youth Movement Museum on Wednesday on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the DPRK and Syria." In November, Sulaiman and Syrian embassy individuals visited the Mansudae Art Studio on "the 46th anniversary of the corrective movement in Syria" and paid tribute to Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, along with being briefed on the fact that studio was "built as the world-level art production base under the care of the peerlessly great persons of Mt. Paektu," looking around various "production rooms and the art exhibition hall." While the Syrian media reprinting statements of the DPRK resisting U$ imperialism and calling for a peace treaty ending the Korean war, along with reprinting Kim Jong Un's New Years Address, the DPRK criticized terrorist acts in Syria while reiterating their "full support and solidarity with the just struggle of the government and people of the Syrian Arab Republic to foil the hostile forces' challenge and aggression" and harshly criticizing "air strikes against Syria being made by the U.S. and the West under the pretext of "anti-terrorism war.""

There were other forms of exchange between the two countries. Varied Korean organizations attended events in Syria, while there were calls to enhance cooperation between the two countries, especially in the area of health, with support of the DPRK by Syria also emphasized. In *Rodong Sinmun*, there are varied news articles on Syrian-Korean relations. Apart from congratulating the ruling party of Syria, with this same ruling party congratulating the WPK in turn, the vice-chairman of the Central Committee of the WPK, Ri Su Yong, met the Syrian ambassador, Sulaiman in June. In a show of further solidarity, Bashar Al-Assad sent 13 messages to Kim Jong Un throughout the year on topics such as honoring Kim Jong Il five years after his death, cooperative relations between the two countries, thanked Kim Jong Un for remembering his birthday, and consolation on the damage to people's lives, property, and infrastructure in North Hamgyong Province from a flood, and many other topics including congratulating Kim Jong Un on his election as "chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK at the Fourth Session of the 13th Supreme People's Assembly" on June 29 ("Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Dec 16, 2016; "Greetings to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Oct 12, 2016; "Message of Sympathy to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Oct 6, 2016; "Reply to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Sept 14, 2016; "Greetings to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Sept 8, 2016; "Congratulations to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Jul 4, 2016; "Congratulations to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, May 13, 2016; "Greetings to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, May 8, 2016; "Reply Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 21, 2016; "Congratulations to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 13, 2016; "Reply Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Mar 10, 2016; "Kim Jong Un Receives Reply Message from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Feb 15, 2016; "Kim Jong Un Receives Message of Greeting from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Feb 15, 2016) The same was the case for messages from Kim Jong Un himself. He sent eight messages to Assad on similar topics, such as honoring the "anniversary of the corrective movement in Syria," the 51st birthday of Assad, remembering (and hoping for stronger) cooperation between the two countries, and expressing "deepest condolences and sympathy to Bashar Al-Assad over the death of Anisa Makhlouf," his mother ("Kim Jong Un Sends Greetings to Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Nov 18, 2016; "Kim Jong Un Sends Reply Messages to Foreign Party and State Leaders," *Rodong Sinmun*, Nov 12, 2016 (he also sent messages to "the president of Laos...and the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization"); "Kim Jong Un Congratulates Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Sept 13, 2016; "Kim Jong Un Sends Message of Greeting to Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Jul 21, 2016; "Kim Jong Un Sends Reply Message to Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, May 27, 2016; "Kim Jong Un Sends Reply Message to Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 23, 2016; "Kim Jong Un Congratulates Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 15, 2016; "Message of Condolence to Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Feb 12, 2016).

In 2017 (Juche 106), the two countries continued to hold together in a strong bond of solidarity. In interviews that year, Bashar Al-Assad cited the DPRK as one of the countries "which say the truth as it is and take a principled and moral position...[and] do not do the West's bidding" also saying this list included "Belarus, Russia, [and] Iran" and also said that the U$ wants to "control all the states of the world without exception" saying that "what is happening to Syria, to Korea, to Iran, to Russia, and maybe to Venezuela now, aims at re-imposing American hegemony on the world." Bourgeois media that year grumbled about Kim Jong Un congratulating Syria's ruling party on its "founding anniversary," the gratitude Assad showed toward Iran and the DPRK for supporting the Syrian fight against terrorism, and once again claiming that war materials from the DPRK "ended up in Syria," citing magical UN reports we can't see, feeding the never-ending Orientalist rumor-mill (even claiming there are Korean workers in Damascus). These outlets, coupled with Zionists, did acknowledge that Syria and the DPRK "share anti-imperialist world views that bind them together" and have a "symbiotic relationship" which should be seen as a positive, with others angry about the alliance between the two countries, saying it "poses a long-term security threat to the United States and its allies in the Middle East and Asia," with some support for murderous measures against the country. It was also noted that the sloppy cruise missile attack by the orange menace could be designed to intimidate the DPRK (and send a message to China), but this didn't work because the former state said that the strike on Syria vindicates the push to strengthen their nuclear program as a form of self-defense.

Moving away from the horrid bourgeois media, it is worth looking at state media which is more accurate in delineating relationships between the two countries. In March, Kim Jong Un congratulated Bashar Al-Assad "on the 54th anniversary of the March 8 revolution in Syria" while in April another message was sent to Assad, with another message of congratulations, this one saying that the "Baath Arab Socialist Party has achieved great successes in their struggle for building an independent and prosperous country and safeguarding the unity and dignity, regional peace and security for the past seven decades since its founding" and called for stronger relations between the two countries. In August, a delegation from the Syria Baath Children Organization, led by Waddah Sawas, director of the Technology, Information and External Relations Department, visited Mangyongdae, Kim Il Sung's birthplace, and also "toured the Tower of the Juche Idea, the Youth Movement Museum, Pyongyang Primary School No. 4, [and] the Mangyongdae Schoolchildren's Palace," to name a few attractions. With the Syrian media noting the Korean people and the Korean embassy in Damascus marking the birth of Kim Jong Il 75th birthday on February 16, there were also calls for stronger cooperation, and relations in general, especially in the area of economics. To the chagrin of anti-Korea outlets like *NK News*, the DPRK declared in November it wanted to help Syria rebuild itself (a noble declaration) after all these years of war.

Before getting to Rodong Sinmun, there was an interview with Sulaiman, the Ambassador of Syria to the DPRK.It was in an anti-Korean outlet, but what it said is worth noting. Sulaiman works day-to-day, helping maintain the friendship between the two countries, while following "news from Syria, day-by-day, minute-by-minute," noting that

> *In every meeting, every function, every symposium, every international meeting, the DPRK expresses support to us, they express solidarity – not only the media, even from the people. It is not only a policy issue, it is a massive popular thing for the Korean people to stand in support of Syria, with the Syrian people.*

This is broadly not recognized by haters of the DPRK. He goes on to say that while there is no military cooperation between the two countries now, there is a history of "normal military cooperation and technical experience exchange," laughing off the idea that missile scientists and weapons experts from the DPRK helped out in the early years of the imperialist attack on Syria. Sulaiman, who was in New York City from 1994 (Juche 83) to 2000 (Juche 89) at the UN, then in Australia until 2013 (Juche 102) when he moved to Pyongyang, "initially as chargé d'affaires at the embassy." In describing his experience, he said that the country is "very beautiful" and "very friendly" even to foreigners with a lot of diplomatic activity back-and-forth, with continual opportunities to meet others, as he marvels "at their organization and punctuality in assembling all the different ambassadors, heads of missions or staff of UN organizations … (to) go at a certain time to visit the landmarks and different places. I like it very much.” As *NK News* grumbles that Syria doesn’t use the “human rights” charade against the DPRK, Sulaiman says that “we in Syria respect the people of Korea – the DPRK – the leadership, (and) the relations we have,” doesn’t feel any alienation in the North, and while he complains about the “expense of some of the stuff and materials that are brought to Pyongyang,” like a bar of laurel soap coming from Aleppo, basic things like vegetables have a “fine” price. Instead of summarizing everything else he says in the article, it is worth quoting what he has to say:

> *We have a bi-annual joint high-level ministerial commission that meets once in Pyongyang and once in Damascus. And then there are agreements in the economic field, in the cultural, educational, tourism, sports, and many other things. But in the last years because of the situation in Syria mainly – I wouldn’t say in Korea…things are a bit halted. [Now] it is from our side that things are not going as normal as one would expect…Of course, we belong to different cultures in the Arab and Asian regions, but we have a lot in common to address the issues that really are at stake in the current times. The relations are strong, basically, because we share the same values: the same suffering, the same mentality, the same orientation…[both DPRK and Syria suffer from] the same colonial problem: when the U.S. intervened during the Korean War and, of course, the same thing happened in our region with Israel…Western countries [which impose sanctions]are the main reason for the wretched case of the people in either country…I will answer anything you ask about human rights; anything,..But put it across the board. If it is across the board and to the same standard, we accept it, no question, no problem. [As long as U$ officials go to Saudi Arabia] and bow to them… where women aren’t allowed to drive cars and are forced to wear headscarves, [criticism of the DPRK is unfair when] they only single out one country, then we refuse to see it. If you ask ‘why is North Korea making nuclear armaments?’ [then] I as a friend of Korea, I would say ‘first put all countries under question and then I’ll answer you.’ Ban Ki-moon never showed any integrity in his work. Not towards North Korea, not towards Syria…I lived in in New York,*

> *because of my work with the United Nations, for six years and when I see…these so-called accusations against Trump, that he is President Putin's ally, I ask myself this question: 'Why not?' "hat is wrong with having good relations with Russia? Why must there be animosity between the U.S. and Russia?"…The only thing the U.S. could do is a military invasion of this country…my feeling is that this is impossible: I don't think the U.S. can intervene in a country like the DPRK. I think this country is more fortified than one can imagine, because there is unity between the people and the leadership…escalation will do more damage to the U.S. and its interests in the region than damage to this country…I visited many other countries, [but when] I look at this country I see that out of severe poverty… they do miracles here, really…And it's not like I'm saying what the state media says. In our country we don't have this: we thought that we were living in prosperity before the war. This country, after the sanctions and with the skills that they have, they are making miracles…I look at it and believe this is really a great country and I wish every country was like North Korea in their achievements and miracles. What if they were not under sanctions? They would do even more.*

Beyond what Sulaiman has to say, the Koreans showed their thanks and solidarity. At the Tenth Plenary Session of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in Turkey from November 21 to 23, Ri Jong Hyok, SPA deputy and director of the National Reunification Institute, leading the SPA delegation, made a speech at the plenary session, saying in the conclusion that "I would like to express unreserved support to and solidarity with the peoples in Asian countries including Iran, Syria and Palestine who are struggling to put an end to the interference of foreign forces and to defend the sovereignty of the nation." Additionally, *Rodong Sinmun* noted that the Socialist Unionist Party of Syria formed a "committee for remembering leader Kim Jong Il" with this committee headed by General Secretary Adnan Ismail, and the committing organizing "political and cultural events in praise of Kim Jong Il's exploits in the period from Nov. 16 to Dec. 18." Additionally, apart from criticism of the cruise missile attack, called the "Shayrat missile strike" on Wikipedia, on Syria by the orange menace on April 7th, representatives of the DPRK at the UN criticized U$ scheming to "overthrow the legitimate government of Syria by continuously stretching out its claws of aggression" and turning a "blind eye to the heinous acts of Israel…while condemning in every manner only the Syrian government fighting to protect its national sovereignty and security should not be tolerated any longer ("Spokesman for Korean Jurists Committee Hits out at U.S. Missile Attack on

Syria," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 17, 2017; "U.S. Military Attack on Sovereign State Blasted," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 17, 2017; "U.S. Missile Attack on Syria Unpardonable: DPRK FM Spokesman," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 11, 2017). Interestingly, the Koreans criticized the Chinese response to the military attack, saying they may have felt it wasn't a "big deal" and implying they were courted by the imperialists, again showing the independence of the country from domination. In terms of the relationship between the two countries on varied occasions Syrian delegations, of the Syria Baath Children Organization, Syrian General Sports Union, and members of the Syrian embassy there, were in the DPRK, specifically visiting in Mangyongdae (birthplace of Kim Il Sung), Pyongyang, as recounted in seven articles in *Rodong Sinmun*, and an agreement about "exchange and cooperation in sports" was inked ("Sojourn of Syrian Delegation in Pyongyang," *Rodong Sinmun*, Aug 2, 2017; "Syrian Delegation Pays Homage to Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il," *Rodong Sinmun*, Aug 1, 2017; "Syrian Delegation Here," *Rodong Sinmun*, Jul 28, 2017; "Syrian Delegation Visits Mangyongdae," *Rodong Sinmun*, May 10, 2017; "Kim Yong Nam Meets Syrian Delegation," *Rodong Sinmun*, May 9, 2017; "Syrian Delegation Arrives," *Rodong Sinmun*, May 6, 2017; "Syrian Embassy Officials Visit Korean Revolution Museum," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 21, 2017). Apart from this, there were also the typical diplomatic greetings. Assad sent greetings to Kim Jong Un on nine occasions that year on topics ranging from cooperation between the two countries, founding anniversaries of the WPK, birth of Kim Il Sung and the DPRK, to name a few, especially thanking the DPRK for its support [and solidarity] ("Reply Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Nov 22, 2017; "Congratulatory Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Oct 9, 2017; "Reply Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Sept 14, 2017; "Greetings to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Sept 8, 2017; "Reply Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 21, 2017; "Syrian President Greets Kim Jong Un on Day of Sun," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 12, 2017; "Congratulatory Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 12, 2017; "Reply Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 10, 2017; "Reply Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Mar 13, 2017). In response, Kim Jong Un sent his greetings, with the president of the SPA (Kim Yong Nam) even sending a message to Assad while Kim Su Kil of the WPK met the Syria's Baath Arab Socialist Party at the 19th International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Russia. Unlike previous years, the same number of messages were sent to Syria by the Koreans, covering subjects such as "congratulation and militant greeting to the Syrian president on his 52nd birthday" and on Assad's re-election, than from Syria's leaders ("Kim Jong Un Sends Reply Messages to Foreign Party and State Leaders," *Rodong Sinmun*, Nov 11, 2017 (also sent greetings to Laotian party and Palestinians); "Kim Su Kil Meets Delegations of Various Political Parties," *Rodong Sinmun*, Nov 10, 2017 (also this Kim met with the South African Communist Party and the Communist Party of India (Marxist)); "Kim Jong Un Sends Reply Messages to Foreign Party and State Leaders," *Rodong Sinmun*, Oct 12, 2017, ; "Kim Jong Un Congratulates Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Sept 12, 2017; "Reply Message to Kim Jong Un from Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, May 9, 2017; "Kim Jong Un Sends Greetings to Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 28, 2017; "Kim Jong Un Sends Greetings to Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 18, 2017; "Kim Jong Un Sends Greetings to Regional Secretary of Baath Arab Socialist Party," *Rodong Sinmun*, Apr 7, 2017; "Message of Sympathy to Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Mar 5, 2017; "Kim Jong Un Sends Greetings to Syrian President," *Rodong Sinmun*, Mar 10, 2017).

2018 (Juche 107) the relations continue to strengthen without question. While the bourgeois media declares that "the US intends to make Syria an international pariah state much like North Korea," the reality of the situation is that there are "deep-rooted friendly relations binding the two countries," with the Koreans praising the Syrians shooting down "an Israeli F-16 jet which had attacked the Syrian territory, stressing that Syria has the right to defend itself by taking all measures to protect its sovereignty (Alex Lockie, "US just detailed its plan to kick Assad out of Syria by treating the country like North Korea," *Business Insider*, Feb 8, 2018). Additionally, just this year, Assad has sent greetings on varied occasions, anniversaries of Korean leaders were marked, and there were efforts to enhance cooperation in the areas of media and the parliaments of each respective country. In recent days, Syria seemed to be at the end of a period of war but imperialists don't want that. With the U$ imperialists working to create more chaos there, there have been reports (also see here and here) that the Syrians have been willing to work with the imperialist-backed Kurds in Afrin to fight off Turkish aggression against them, although the Kurds deny this, not surprisingly. It seems this is evidently the case with the Syrian state media outlet, SANA declaring "Popular forces arrive in Afrin to support locals against the aggression waged by the Turkish regime on the city since January 20th" on Feb 20. It is a bit complicated because the Turks are one and with U$ imperialism, but so are the "good" Kurds, meaning that both sides are backed by such imperialism as ways of destabilizing the region. It is also worth pointing out that these Kurds are supported by the Russians, as are the Turks, adding a new dimension. With the strong U$ imperialist-backing of the Kurds, coupled with illegal presence of troops, strong tensions between the U$ and the Turks have developed (Other articles attest to the Kurdish kidnapping tactics in northern Syria, illegal "permanent" presence of U$ troops in Syria (also see here, here, here, here, the bourgeois media's double standards, and stories about the Zionist attack on Syria which involved the governments of Lebanon, Iran, and Yemen, along with Hezbollah, praising Syria's actions (shooting down the Zionist warplane). Also there are statements of support for Syria by Iran (also see here), and Russia). With all of this, as the imperialists (as do the Zionists) work to try to seize the resources of Syria and destabilize the country (even meeting with the "opposition") the efforts of reconstruction in the country are going forward. For example, there is a government "plan to re-launch all stalled and halted private sector investment projects in all provinces, and to provide facilitations to encourage investors to activate these projects" which would undoubtedly benefit the state's bourgeoisie. As the state of Syria participates in the 12th session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), the Russian ambassador at the UN "stressed that any decision on Syria should to be taken by the Syrian people themselves without any foreign intervention or dictates" with the Chinese echoing this, which is positive, but doesn't exclude bourgeoisie from their countries, and elsewhere, shaping the situation for their benefit. The latter is definitely the case for Russia whose ambassador to Syria, Alexander Kinshchak, declared in its state media outlet, *TASS*, that fellow BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) should "establish a foothold in Syria's promising market" since the "the country's economy has suffered an enormous damage" due to the conflict in that country, saying they should work to help rebuild the country's economy. He specifically said that "in particular, as a result of their deliberate strikes, dozens of vital fuel and energy infrastructure facilities in Syria's north as well as bridges, roads, educational and medical institutions have been destroyed."

In recent days there have been a number of developments. For one, Syrian militias favoring the government have joined the U$-backed Kurds to fight alongside them regardless of shelling by the Turkish aggressors, which violates UN Security Council resolution no. 2401, and there has been fighting in East Ghouta, with Syria heroically fighting against U$-backed terrorists. Resolution 2401 is a ceasefire resolution (for 30 days), which passed the UN Security Council unanimously but does not "apply to military operations against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (also known as ISIL/Da'esh), Al Qaeda and Al Nusra Front." Even with that, there are reports, even in conservative media, that U$ troops are staying in Iraq and Syria indefinitely, and that the Zionists are supporting more rebel factions in Syria. Still, there is hope for a positive outcome with a Syrian Dialogue Congress, and efforts to talk with the "opposition." This would stand against the "Takfiri terror" or Wahhabi terror" supported by the capitalist poles of power, terror which is not "Islamic." Otherwise, the Indians have proposed to help with rebuilding the country and the Russian bourgeoisie want closer ties with Syria. As the years go on, the relationship between the DPRK and Syria will ever remain, becoming stronger and stronger.

On top of all of this, the DPRK has also supported Angola, Algeria, Madagascar, Libya, Mozambique, Vietnam, Ireland, Zimbabwe, the Naxalites, Hezbollah, Turkey, and Salvador Allende.

UNDERSTANDING JUCHE: A BRIEF SUMMARY

Juche (Korean: 주체/主體, or "self-reliance") is the official ideology of the DPRK, described by the gov't as "Kim Il-sung's original, brilliant and revolutionary contribution to national and international thought". It postulates that "man is the master of his destiny", and that the Korean masses are to act as the "masters of the revolution and construction" and that by becoming self-reliant and strong, a nation can achieve communism. So, Juche is, in layman's terms, a derivation of Marxism-Leninism with Maoist influences - so much so that it speaks of applying the Mass Line (as we will see in the next section of this doc). It was first introduced by Kim Il-Sung at the Meeting of Leading Personnel of the Young Communist League and the Anti-Imperialist Youth League held at Kalun in June 1930. It is primarily concerned with the laws of the social movement and the development of socialist ideology under the socialist socio-economic system. Marxism-Leninism, as well as Dialectical and Historical Materialism, are assumed by this ideology, so you should have some knowledge about these topics if you want to learn about the Juche Idea in particular. Kim Jong-Il talks about the foundations of Marxism-Leninism inherent in the Korean revolutionary philosophies and ideologies in "On Correctly Understanding the Originality of Kimilsungism":

"Kimilsungism was founded and has been developed in the course of safeguarding and embodying the ideological and theoretical achievements of Marxism-Leninism. The Juche Idea itself is an idea discovered in the process of the revolutionary struggle waged under the banner of Marxism-Leninism; it is an idea which has opposed all trends of idealism and metaphysics and strictly adhered to the materialistic and dialectic stand. The revolutionary theory of Kimilsungism is also a theory which was founded and enriched in the course of protecting the revolutionary quintessence of Marxist-Leninist theory from bourgeois and opportunist theories and creatively applying and developing it in line with the requirements of the revolutionary practice of our times."

Kim Il-sung initially developed the ideology, which was originally viewed as a variant of Marxism–Leninism until it became distinctly Korean in character while incorporating the historical materialist ideas of Marxism–Leninism and strongly emphasized the individual within the midst of the collective, the nation-state and its sovereignty. Consequently, the DPRK adopted Juche into a set of principles and it has used these principles to justify its policy decisions. Such principles include moving the nation towards claimed jaju ("independence"), through the construction of a jarip ("national economy") and an emphasis upon jawi ("self-defence") in order to establish socialism. The practice of Juche is firmly rooted in the ideals of sustainability through independence and a lack of dependency. Kim Il-Sung is not a god. He has never been such a thing, nor is he regarded by anyone in the country as such. In all my discussions with people from the DPRK, I have heard great respect for Kim Il-Sung. You should understand who he is as a historical actor to understand perhaps why people regard him as important.

Kim Il-Sung was a Communist, a Marxist, and a fierce guerrilla fighter against the brutal Japanese colonial domination over Korea. His entire life, from a young child to the end of his days, was involved in anti-imperialist struggle. He founded the Workers Party of Korea, enacted land reforms to crush the landlord class, dissolved the petty-bourgeoisie class, formed a state and cooperative-owned economy, and established a firm vanguard party which held no patience for infiltrators or revisionists. He commanded the Fatherland Liberation War and maintained Korea's sovereignty and independence from the US Imperialists. The Juche Idea is concerned primarily with elucidating the attributes of man which drive social movement. These are defined as independence, creativity, and consciousness, which complement and require each other. These attributes are explained bit by bit, shown to differentiate man from animals through his conscious, creative activity which frees him from the fetters of nature and society by advancing in the progressive struggle for communism.

If you want to talk about the economic or social policy of the DPRK, the concept you're looking for is primarily Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, not the Juche Idea. A primary point of the Juche Idea is that each revolution must be carried out by its own people, rather than by a foreign power attempting to dominate the younger revolution towards its own interests. Kim Jong-Il talks about this in On the Juche Idea:

"The revolution in each country should be carried out responsibly by its own people, the masters, in an independent manner, and in a creative way suitable to its specific conditions. Independence and creativeness are the inherent requirements of a revolutionary movement, the communist movement."

A central concept of Juche is Kimilsungism–Kimjongilism. Kim Jong-il first mentioned Kimilsungism in the 1970s and it was introduced alongside the Ten Principles for the Establishment of a Monolithic Ideological System. Not long after the term's introduction into the North Korean lexicon, Kim Jong-il allegedly launched a "Kimilsungism-isation of the Whole Society" campaign. Campaigns were introduced so as to strengthen Kim Jong-il's position within the Workers' Party of Korea. According to political analyst Lim Jae-cheon, "Kimilsungism refers to the thoughts of Kim Il-sung. It is interchangeable with the juche idea", sort of like what Maoism is to Mao Zedong Thought. Kimilsungism is an ideological and theoretical system with the Juche idea as its core. The originality of Kimilsungism is derived from the originality of the Juche idea. Therefore, when we talk about Kimilsungism, first we have to think of the Juche idea. Yet, we should not regard the Juche idea in the same light as Kimilsungism. Some people now put them in the same category, but they are different in content. Kimilsungism comprises the Juche idea and a far-reaching revolutionary theory and leadership method evolved from this idea. We therefore have defined Kimilsungism as a system based on the idea, theory and method of Juche.

When we say Kimilsungism is an original revolutionary idea different from Marxism-Leninism, we never mean that it has no derivations from Marxism-Leninism. At present there is also a tendency to contrast Kimilsungism with Marxism-Leninism, allegedly to emphasize its originality. But its originality is not necessarily proved only by contrasting it with Marxism-Leninism, denying its derivations from the latter. Both Kimilsungism and Marxism-Leninism are revolutionary ideas which have provided solutions to the revolutionary practice of the working class. He had this to say about Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism:

"...some people still have a tendency to confuse it with the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism. Viewed from the development of the revolutionary theories of the working class.

Marxism-Leninism is the revolutionary theory of the historical period preceding the evolution of Kimilsungism. Marx scientifically proved, on the basis of materialistic dialectic, the inevitability of the fall of capitalism and the transition to socialism. Lenin followed his theory to make an analysis of monopolistic capitalism. On this basis he elucidated the law of uneven development of capitalism and the possibility of victory of socialism in one particular country, and put forward the revolutionary theory on the establishment of a socialist system. That is why the main content of the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism is the theory on overthrowing capitalism and imperialism, and establishing a socialist system."

The revolutionary theory of Kimilsungism is a revolutionary theory which has provided solutions to problems arising in the revolutionary practice in a new age different from the era that gave rise to Marxism- Leninism. On the basis of the Juche idea, the leader gave a profound explanation of the theories, strategies and tactics on national liberation, class emancipation and human liberation in our era. Thus it can be said that the revolutionary theory of Kimilsungism is a perfect revolutionary theory on communism in the era of Juche. It would not seek some clue in the Marxist-Leninist theory to explain the new revolutionary theory clarified by Kimilsungism, especially the theory on the building of socialism and communism. The problem of building socialism and communism has been clarified in a new way by Kimilsungism. So, in his 1976 speech "On Correctly Understanding the Originality of Kimilsungism", Kim Jong-il states that Kimilsungism comprises the "Juche idea and a far-reaching revolutionary theory and leadership method evolved from this idea". He further added that "Kimilsungism is an original idea that cannot be explained within the frameworks of Marxism–Leninism. The idea of Juche, which constitutes the quintessence of Kimilsungism, is an idea newly discovered in the history of mankind". Kim Jong-il went further, stating that Marxism–Leninism had its own limits. There is a passage below on this:

"The revolutionary theory of Kimilsungism is a revolutionary theory which has provided solutions to problems arising in the revolutionary practice in a new age different from the era that gave rise to Marxism–Leninism. On the basis of Juche (idea), the leader gave a profound explanation of the theories, strategies and tactics of national liberation, class emancipation and human liberations in our era. Thus, it can be said that the revolutionary theory of Kimilsungism is a perfect revolutionary theory of Communism in the era of Juche."

So in this worldview, the Juche idea which constitutes the quintessence of Kimilsungism is an idea newly discovered in the history of human thought. Although Kimilsungism is an idea which represents a historical period different from that of Marxism-Leninism, it is closely connected with the latter because of the common class ideal and objective to serve the revolutionary cause of the working class. Kimilsungism was founded and has been developed in the course of safeguarding and embodying the ideological and theoretical achievements of Marxism-Leninism. The Juche idea itself is an idea discovered in the process of the revolutionary struggle waged under the banner of Marxism-Leninism; it is an idea which has opposed all trends of idealism and metaphysics and strictly adhered to the materialistic and dialectic stand. The revolutionary theory of Kimilsungism is also a theory which was founded and enriched in the course of protecting the revolutionary quintessence of Marxist- Leninist theory from bourgeois and opportunist theories and creatively applying and developing it in line with the requirements of the revolutionary practice of our times. We should oppose both the dogmatic attitude of swallowing Marxism-Leninism in its entirety without seeing its historical limitation and the nihilistic attitude of negating it while only emphasizing its limitation.

The materialist dialectic of Marxism presented the correlation between matter and consciousness and between being and thinking as the fundamental question of philosophy and proved the primacy of matter, the primacy of being. On this basis it clarified the "laws of motion of the objective world". The material nature of the world and its universal laws of motion having been clarified, the Juche idea presented the position and role of man in the world as the fundamental question of philosophy and proved that man is the master of everything and decides everything. It explicated on this basis the law that governs the domination, transformation and development of the world by man. The Juche idea puts man in the place of a master who dominates the world, instead of simply presenting him as a part of it. This philosophical principle of the Juche idea cannot be explained within the framework of materialistic dialectic. In "THE JUCHE PHILOSOPHY IS AN ORIGINAL REVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHY", Kim Jong-il clarifies on this:

"The new outlook on the world established by the Juche philosophy does not deny the world outlook of dialectical materialism. The Juche philosophy regards the world outlook of dialectical materialism as its premise. The Juche view of the world that the world is dominated and transformed by man is inconceivable separately from the materialistic dialectical understanding of the essence of the objective material world and the general law of its motion. From the idealistic view that the world is something mysterious you cannot draw the conclusion that man dominates the world, and from the metaphysical view that the world is immutable you cannot infer that man can transform the world. The Juche view of the world that the world is dominated and transformed by man can only be established when the materialistic dialectical understanding of the world that the world is made of material and ceaselessly changes and develops is recognized. In spite of a number of limitations and immaturities of the Marxist materialist dialectics, its basic principles are scientific and valid. That is why we say that the Juche Philosophy regards materialistic dialectics as its premise.

Materialistic dialectics is the premise for the Juche philosophy does not mean that the Juche philosophy has merely inherited and developed the materialistic dialectics. Although it would be impossible to acquire a scientific understanding of the world and transformit without the materialistic dialectical understanding of the objective material world, you cannot draw the conclusion that man is the master of the world and plays a decisive role in transforming the world simply from the proposition of materialism that the world is made of material and from the dialectical principle that the world ceaselessly changes and develops. Only On the basis of the clarification of man's essential qualities which distinguish man radically from all the other material beings can man's outstanding position and role as the master of the world capable of transforming the world be clarified. Only on the basis of man's essential qualities as a social being with independence, creativity and consciousness as scientifically clarified by the Juche philosophy has the basic principle that man is the master of the world and plays the decisive role in transforming the world."

Expanding upon this, he continues:

"The major limitation of the materialistic conception of history is that it failed to correctly expound the peculiar law of the social movement and explained the principles of the social movement mainly on the basis of the common character of the motion of nature and the social movement in that both of them are the motion of material. Marxist materialistic conception of history broke down society into socialbeing and social consciousness and attached determining significance to the social being; it also broke down the social structure into productive forces and production relations, foundation and superstructure, and attached decisive significance to material production and economic relations. This means an unaltered application of the principle of materialist dialectics to society, the principle that the world is of material and changes and develops in accordance with the general law of the motion of material. Theworld, viewed by the founders of Marxism when applying the general law governing the material world to social history, is an integrity of not only nature but also man and society in that they are material beings. If you consider man as a part of the world, a material integrity, not as a social being with independence, creativity and consciousness, and apply the general law of the movement of the material world to social history, you cannot avoid seeing the socio-historical movement as a process of the history of nature."

As well as stating:

"Although the founders of Marxism established the materialistic dialectical concept of social history by applying the general law of the development of the material world to social history, they themselves came across many problems in the practical social movement, problems which could not be resolved only by the general law of the development of the material world.So they attempted to overcome the one-sidedness of the materialistic/dialectical concept of social history by advancing some theories, for example, that although social consciousness emerges as the reflection of the material and economic conditions, it reacts on these conditions and that although politics is defined by the economy, it reacts on the economy. However, the Marxist materialist concept of history is, in essence, a view on social history which considers the common character of the motion of nature and the social movement as the main factor. This theory was unable to avoid the limitation of identifying the process of social development with that of natural history. The fundamental difference between the Juche philosophy and the preceding philosophy results, in the final analysis, from a different understanding of man. The Marxist philosophy defined the essence of man as the ensemble of social relations, but it failed to correctly expound the characteristics of man as a social being. The preceding theory explained the principle of the social movement mainly on the basis of the general law of the development of the material world, because it failed to clarify the essential qualities of social man. For the first time, the Juche philosophy gave a perfect elucidation of the unique qualities of man as a social being.

Regarding the question of man's essential characteristics as the issue of the level of his development as a material being, they still assert that the origin of man's independence, creativity and consciousness should be sought in the diversity of the material components and the complexity of their combination and structure. This is, in fact, a view regarding man's essential qualities as the extension of natural and biological attributes, as their development and consummation. When talking about man as an organism, one can consider him in comparison with other organisms, or discuss the characteristics of his biological components and their combination and structure... The *origin of man's essential qualities must be sought not in the development of his features common with those of other material beings but in the characteristics unique to him. Man has acquired independence, creativity and consciousness, because he is a social being who forms a social collective and lives and works in asocial relationship. These qualities of man are social attributes which are formed and developed through the socio-historical process of his working in the social relationship. Of course, these qualities of his would be inconce-ivable without his highly developed organic body. In the sense of his highly developed organic body, man can be said to be the highest product of evolution and the most developed material being. Our social scientists argue about the material components and their combination and structure, and relate them to man's essential qualities, preaching that the biological factors constitute the major content of the Juche philosophy. Their argument is a deviation that explains the Juche philosophy within the framework of Marxist dialectical materialism."*

And lastly, KJI writes:

"Our scientists and people must study and follow the Juche philosophy, but they must also know the philosophical ideas of Marxism-Leninism. The social scientists in particular must be well acquainted with the preceding philosophy. In studying the preceding philosophy, it is important to distinguish limitations and immaturity, along with progressive and positive aspects. Only when we know correctly not only its historical achievements but also limitations of the period and ideo-theoretical immaturity can we prevent deviations of dogmatic attitude towards preceding theories and acquire a deep understanding of the originality and superiority of the Juche Philosophy."

In "LET US ADVANCE UNDER THE BANNER OF MARXISM-LENINISM AND THE JUCHE IDEA", Kim Jong-il states:

"Marxism-Leninism which clarified the working class's theory, strategy and tactics of revolutionary struggle is not a dogma but a guide to action. To adhere to the Juche standpoint in the revolution and construction conforms with the essential character of Marxism-Leninism as a creative doctrine. Only through a correct application of MarxismLeninism from the standpoint of Juche, can the communists display its might to the full and further enrich its treasure house by creating new revolutionary theories. The Juche idea is a brilliant fruit of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's ideological and theoretical activities which cover more than half a century; it is an ideological and theoretical crystallization of the Korean revolution."

In this sense, Juche isn't an ideology at all, but rather a specific movement and response to the historical material conditions that gave rise to the Korean revolution and revolutionary War, focused on the reunification of Korea and self reliance through industry. Juche *cannot* be revisionist because it doesn't revise Marxism at all. The Juche Idea takes Marxism (especially dialectical materialism) as its premise and foundation, but goes to clarify a different philosophical question. Marxism answers the question of matter versus consciousness, Juche answers the question of humanity's internal nature and interactions with the objective world. Juche fully supports the Marxist view of how the objective world works; what it does differently is that it clarifies how humanity fits into this. Because humans have a need for independence, have the ability to understand the objective working of the world, and have the ability to apply that knowledge creatively, Juche would say that humanity is the subject of history. This means that while we are bound to our material conditions, we have the potential to know the laws and to manipulate the world from that. This makes us, as Juche says, potential "masters of everything who decide everything". The masses make history, not the material conditions (though we are still bound to their laws and effects on us). The DPRK upholds Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, of which Juche is the main part. This is not Marxism-Leninism because Juche purports to transcend certain limitations of ML theory, but it is not wholly divorced from it either. They don't throw out the theory, of course, but they definitely are not *just* ML.

For further reading, there is an entire online library of the works of Kim Jong-il and the Juche philosophy, as well as an online collection holding more than 40 collected works for Kim il-Sung, many of which directly speak on Juche. Furthermore, there is a list of the writings of Kim il-Sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-il below:

- On the establishment of the Workers' Party of North Korea and the question of founding the Workers' Party of South Korea https://www.marxists.org/archive/kim-il-sung/1946/09/26.htm
- For the development of the Non-Aligned Movement https://www.marxists.org/archive/kim-il-sung/1986/06/20.htm
- For a free and peaceful new world https://www.marxists.org/archive/kim-il-sung/1986/06/20.htm
- On eliminating dogmatism and formalism and establishing Juche in ideological work https://www.marxists.org/archive/kim-il-sung/1955/12/28.htm
- Kim Jong-Un aphorisms https://www.scribd.com/document/355145202/Kim-Jong-Un-Aphorisms-1
- Kim Il-Sung internet archive https://www.marxists.org/archive/kim-il-sung/index.htm
- DPRK E-library http://www.korea-dpr.com/e_library.html
- Korean Friendship Association Official Book/Article library https://www.kfausa.org/official-dprk-books-and-article-pdfs/
- Revolution and Socialist Construction in Korea - Selected Writings of Kim Il Sung (scanned book) https://archive.org/details/RevolutionSocialistConstructionKorea
- For the Independent, Peaceful Reunification of Korea by Kim Il-Sung (scanned book) https://archive.org/details/ForTheIndependentPeacefulReunificationOfKorea

ELECTIONS IN THE DPRK: THE MYTH OF THE KIM “DYNASTY” AND THE REALITY OF THE KOREAN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

With the controversy earlier this year (2020) centered around the "death" of "North Korean" "dictator" Kim Jong-Un and the DPRK (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) routinely criticizing fascist America as usual, there has never been a better time for counter-propaganda to surface. The DPRK is not only threatened by forces within it's sister country, “South Korea” (the Republic of Korea), but also by programs like THAAD, provocations from the Trump administration (and every presidential administration since the founding of the DPRK in 1948), and attacks by “human rights” organizations in the West, specifically by the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The latter claims that citizens in the country “suffer violations of most aspects of their human rights” and the former saying that under the leadership of Kim Jong-Un the country “remains among the world’s most repressive countries” with a “dynasty.” This echoes the same sentiments from the CIA World Factbook and US State Department which call the DPRK an "authoritarian state”, showing that “human rights” NGOs and parts of the establishment all categorically serve the same imperialist interests, even if they have different ways of going about acting in these imperialist interests. All of these bourgeois criticisms, like the bourgeois liberals/progressives on internet forums like /r/socialism or just about any anarchist subreddit, implies that the DPRK is not democratic. A look at their elections, especially that of the SPA, shows this to be wrong. First, allow us to do a historical introduction:

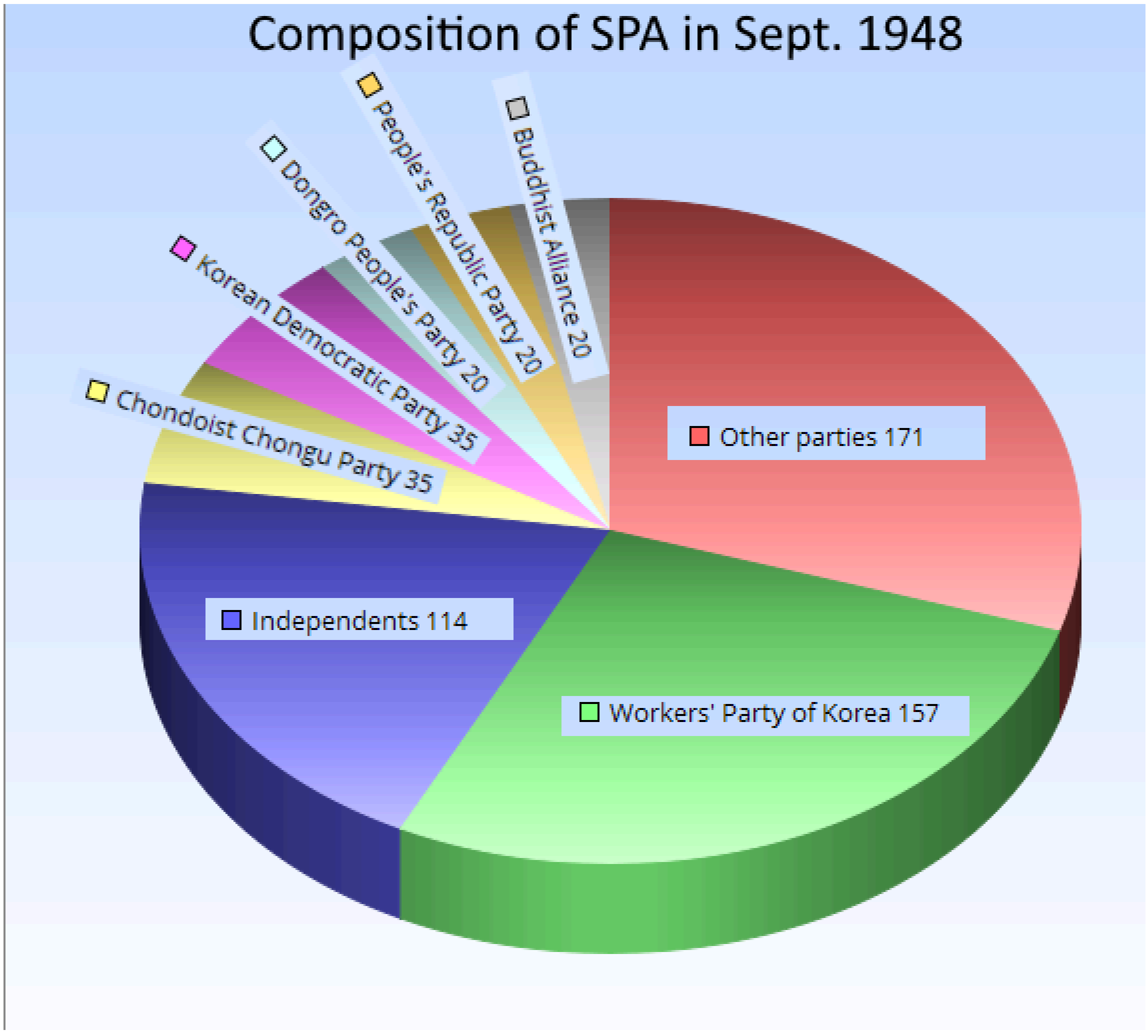
In 1945, in the aftermath of World War II, the Korean Peninsula, which had been occupied by the Japanese imperialists since 1910, was roughly divided between the Soviet occupied zone and the US occupied zone. In the Soviet zone in the North - different from the South where a brutal fascist puppet government was installed - socialism was advanced as the guiding ideology in the North. As the South Korean Party for Reunification put it in February 1971: “after World War II, the US imperialists entered South Korea as invaders and aggressors, not liberators. This is the reason for the division of our country.” In 1945, the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) was created. Kim Il Sung, later the leader of the DPRK, described this process very simply, noting that people’s committees controlled the country before the establishment of a government formally, proving it wasn’t a “dictatorship” to the South. In the essay “*On the establishment of the Workers' Party of North Korea and the question of founding the Workers' Party of South Korea*” he writes the following:

“The foundation of the Workers’ Party representing and defending the interests of the labouring masses of Korea through the merger of the Communist Party and the New Democratic Party is the greatest event in the political life of our people at the present time...In south Korea, however, the activities of those people who are sincerely striving for the merger of the Parties, are obstructed...the reactionary forces has come all out to frustrate the merger of the democratic political parties of the working people...unity and cohesion of the democratic forces throughout Korea is the prerequisite to the building of a new, genuinely democratic Korea...One year has already passed since Korea was liberated from the colonial rule of Japanese imperialism...In the past year we have laid a solid foundation for developing Korea along truly democratic lines and building a People’s Republic by carrying out the great democratic reforms. Our people who took power into their own hands...The composition of the people’s committee membership now active

in north Korea is as follows : Workers [are] 5.7% [.] Peasants [are] 71.8%[.] Office employees [are] 15.8% [.] Handicraftsman [are] 2.1% [.] Tradesmen [are] 4.6% [.] The people's committees…strive to guard the interests of the people…In carrying out its policies, the people's committee relies on the firm unity and the democratic united front of all the political parties and social organizations…Already in March this year, the agrarian reform was carried out in the rural areas of north Korea, bringing about a radical change in production relations. The agrarian reform dealt a decisive blow to the landlord class…Last August the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea proclaimed the law on the nationalization of industrial, transport and communications facilities and banks which had been owned by the Japanese imperialists, pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation…In June this year, the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea promulgated the Labour Law freeing factory and office workers from harsh, colonial-type exploitation and introducing the eight-hour working day and a social insurance system. And a law was passed to guarantee the women social rights equal to those of the men for the first time in the history of our country…Over 8,000 adult schools were opened last year to eliminate illiteracy…The people's committees have done a great deal of work to improve the material and cultural life of the masses of the people and to ensure their political rights…The enforcement of the Law of Nationalization of Industries has wiped out the foundation of Japanese imperialist colonial rule and deprived the traitors to the nation…Meanwhile, the people's committees protect the property of the national capitalists and encourage the business activities of individual entrepreneurs and traders…The workers have won all rights and possibilities to take part in the state political life…The establishment of the Workers' Party through the merger of the two parties is of tremendous historical significance in expanding and strengthening the democratic forces and promoting democratic construction in our country. A party is the advanced detachment of a class defending its interests and fighting for the realization of its demands and aspirations…Our Party, however, is not the one and only Party existing in our country…Our Party gives active support to the democratic demands of the Chongu Party, and closely co-operates with it in order to advance together in step with it…our Party has waged and is waging a common struggle in unity with all the democratic political parties. We must maintain closer ties with members of the Chongu Party and the Democratic Party…We must by all means bring the lines and strategic and tactical policies of the Party home to all its membership and arm the entire Party with the scientific Marxist-Leninist theory and throughgoing revolutionary ideas…The persecution of the working class [in South Korea], in particular, has reached extremes. See the massacre in Kwangju…In this grave situation, the primary task of our nation and the entire working people is to unite and unite…We call for such unity of the toiling masses as can meet the democratic demands of the workers, peasants and working intellectuals…The independence and sovereignty of Korea on democratic lines can be achieved at an early date only if the labouring masses are united as one and all the democratic forces are knit together…Victory belongs to the Korean people who aspire to unity, national independence and democracy. Let us all march forward confidently to victory!"

Two years later, on August 25, 1948, the DPRK, which had undertaken a 70-day debate nationwide on the draft constitution starting in February of the same year, elected its first deputes to the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), its unicameral legislature. In that election, 572 deputies, representing "workers, peasants, deskworkers, intellectuals, businessmen, merchants and religious people," were elected, and the First SPA met between September 2 and 10, with the constitution adopted during this time, a government formed, and the founding of the DPRK proclaimed on September 9, resulting in the Korean people celebrating it annually as "their national day." In this new legislature, the 1st SPA, Kim Il Sung was elected as the Premier and head of the DPRK. To be more specific, in 1948, Juche 37, 99.97% of

Koreans in the north took part, and 77.52% of those in the south, took part in the elections. The results, as displayed in the chart below, shows that while the political parties were part of the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland electoral coalition, there was also a multiparty system which had developed within the DPRK:



Before continuing forward, it is best to describe the powers of the SPA, (Supreme People's Assembly), and why it exists to begin with. As was noted in a session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1991, this legislature is defined by the DPRK's constitution (Articles 73-84) as the "highest organ of State power" and is a representative organ which is formed "through an election conducted of the free will of the entire Korean people" and composed of deputies who are selected by "secret ballot on the principle of universal, equal and direct suffrage," with the same principle applied to election of deputies "to local power organs such as provincial, city and county People's Assemblies." Elsewhere the document describes the SPA as "the highest national representative organ of the entire people that is composed of the representatives of workers, farmers, soldiers and intellectuals from all the political parties, social organizations and other sectors of society." As for the voters, every citizen, regardless of "sex, race, occupation, duration of residence, property status, education, party affiliation, political inclination and religious belief," can vote as long as they are over 17, with the only ones who can't including those decided by court verdict and "insane persons," meaning that all citizens have the right to elect deputies. With only one registration and one ballot cast per voter, in elections that are announced 60 days before for the SPA and 30 days before for the "provincial, city and county People's Assemblies," voters cast a ballot directly for a candidate for the deputy position, which is reflected in the totals. The term of office of SPA members is five years, unless there are unavoidable circumstances leading to a prolonged term. The DPRK representative also says that "an election of a new SPA is held by a decision of the Standing Committee of the SPA prior to expiry of the term of office of the current SPA." While some may cry autocracy, it is much more likely that the Standing Committee helps organize the next or current election of the SPA.

The SPA's most important and exclusive power is "legislative power" which includes adopting, amending, and supplementing the Constitution. Take the adoption of the first DPRK Constitution during the first legislative session, with a nationwide debate "on the draft constitution," with a 31-person committee organized by the SPA to deliberate over the draft, as people's opinions are taken into account. Later on, the DPRK's constitution was revised due to the changing times, with the SPA's term of office extended, the minimum age level of voters was lowered to 17 and more deputies were allocated for the population with new electoral principles. With these changes, the SPA has adopted the Constitution's principles by passing Socialist Labour Law, Land Law, Law on Public Health, Law on the Nursing and Upbringing of Children, Law on Environmental Protection, the Criminal Law, the Civil Law, the Family Law, laws for the "total elimination of tax in kind and taxation which is the remnant of the outdated society" with no tax system no longer in the DPRK, and a law enacting "universal free education and the 11-year compulsory education." It also says "thus in the DPRK all children of pre-school age are brought up at the expense of the State and the society and free compulsory education is in enforcement for [the] rising generation until their working ages. University and college students receive scholarship from the State." The SPA has enacted laws putting in place "perfect and universal free medical care." In every instance, in laws like this and every law, the SPA follows steps of "deliberation, adoption and proclamation," with laws submitted by numerous entities (DPRK President, the Central People's Committee (CPC), the Standing Committee of the SPA, the Administration Council, and all SPA deputies), and approved by a "show of hands," showing the democratic nature of the state. It also says "a constitution should be approved by more than two thirds of all deputies, whereas other ordinances and decisions of the SPA should be approved by more than a half of all deputies present at the meeting."The SPA also has the authority to form central institutions of the state, electing the President of the DPRK (the people who HRW falsely says are part of a "dynasty"), who then picks a number of other individuals. These individuals are chosen on his recommendation: "Vice-Presidents and the First Vice-Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen and Members of the National Defence Commission are elected, the Secretary General and members of the Central People's Committee, the Secretary General and members of the Standing Committee of the SPA and the President of the Central Court are elected or transferred, and the Public Prosecutor General is appointed or removed."Members on SPA committees and the head of the Administration Council (the Premier) are elected and accountable to the SPA. The SPA holds regular sessions to "discuss and solve problems" once or twice a year and extraordinary sessions when needed, with quorum of "more than a half the total number of deputies to meet" and laws adopted having immediate legal effect. They also elect its Chairman and Vice-Chairmen who preside over the sessions, and have the power to "appoint committees as its assistant bodies when it decides that they are necessary for the success of its activities." SPA Committees, whose members are elected among deputies according to the size of leadership, debate about draft laws and budget plans before deliberation by the whole body. [16] However, they cannot "initiate legislative activities nor adopt decisions of any legal validity independently." These committees include the following:

- Credentials Committee (credentials members in the SPA)
- the Bills Committee ("deliberates on the bills, amendments to constitution and laws submitted to the SPA and reports its results to the SPA and its Standing Committee.")
- the Budget Committees ("deliberates upon whether or not the settlement account and compilation of the State budget submitted for deliberation to the SPA conforms with the needs of People and reports its results to the SPA, and examines the budget balance and adopts measures for rectifying shortcomings revealed by the relevant executive bodies.")
- the Foreign Affairs Committee ("discusses the issues arising in foreign affairs, draws up and makes public the documents specifying the stands of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Committee, notifies them to the Foreign Affairs Committees of parliaments of other countries, Inter-Parliamentary Groups and individual MPs concerned and exchanges delegations with various countries the world over.")
- the Reunification Policies Committee ("recommends the measures to be taken by the Supreme People's Assembly in connection with the national reunification question to the Supreme People's Assembly or the Standing Committee of the SPA, and considers the issues of the north-south co-operation, exchange and travel and other matters related to the country's reunification")
- Standing Committee ("When the SPA is not in session, the work with the Committees of the Supreme People's Assembly is undertaken by the Standing Committee of the SPA. The Standing Committee works as a permanent body of the SPA in our country...the Standing Committee functions as its permanent organ between sessions...[It is] composed of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, a secretary general and 15 members including the representatives of political parties and social organizations.")

This document also says that the "system of the State organs consists of power organs, administrative organs, and judiciary and procuratorial organs" which includes "central power organs such as the above-mentioned Supreme People's Assembly, the President of the DPRK and the Central People's Committee, and local power organs like the People's Assemblies and People's Committees of province, city and county. The administrative organs are composed of the Administration Council in the centre and Administration Committees or province, city and county. Judiciary and procuratorial organs are made up of the Central Court and the Central Public Prosecutors Office of the centre and the provincial courts and people's courts, and public prosecutors offices of province, city and county...The President is the Head of State and represents the State power of the DPRK.The President is elected by and accountable for his work to the Supreme People's Assembly...The President is accountable for his work to the

SPA...The term of office of the President is four years, because he is elected in the SPA, which, in its turn, is elected anew in every four years. The President, as the head of the Central People's Committee, which is the highest leadership organ of the State power."

Now, back to the 1948 election. One book, by Anne Louise Strong, does a good job at telling the state of the DPRK in 1949. Summarizing the history compiled by the Korean Friendship Association (KFA), the "peaceful construction" of the new socialist (at the time) nation was stopped on June 25, 1950 (Juche 49). As Vince Sherman even says, the moves of DPRK soldiers into South Korea "was actually an attempt to reunite a nation partitioned by a foreign imperialist power," despite what Trotskyists over at the ISO declare. The Korean People's Army (KPA) had formed into a regular army but the economic state of the country was fragile, but they still were victorious against "arrogant US imperialists" who claimed the US was invincible. As journalist David Halberstam acknowledged, not only were Southern Koreans angry about US presence and the U$ units were in horrid condition, but the people of the DPRK and Chinese communists knew what they were fighting for, unlike the US soldiers, who had no idea what they were fighting for:

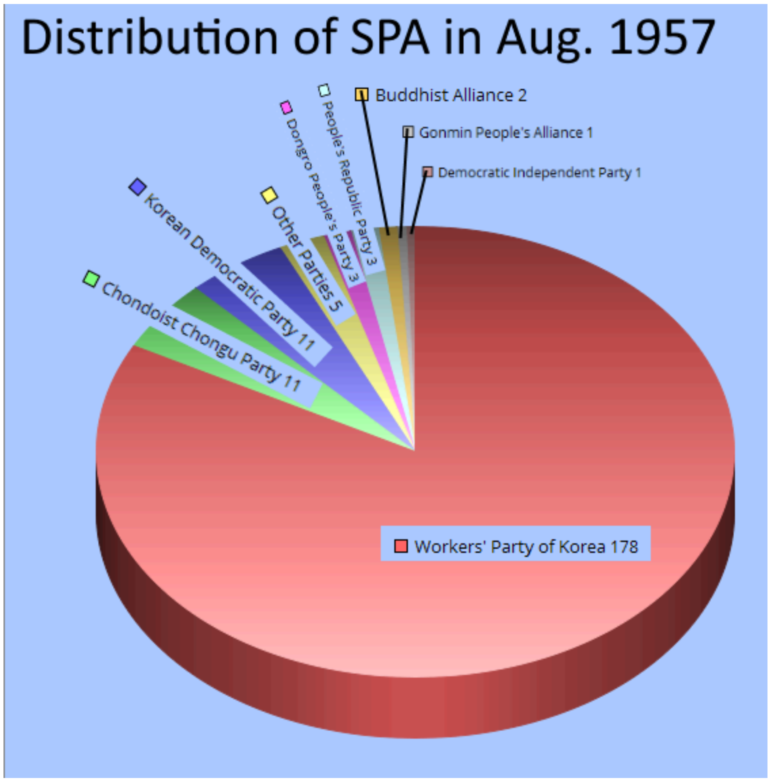
> *"They [the Chinese Communists and DPRK troops] were absolutely sure of whom they were fighting and why. They were fighting white foreigners, imperialists, and capitalists, the children of Wall Street, and of course their puppet allies in the South. The Americans were not so sure, despite periodic lectures on the evils of Communism, whom they were fighting, or for that matter why they were fighting them. They might be soldiers stationed in Japan, but they'd no expectation of going to war, especially in a place called Korea."*

Summarizing what the KFA said, on July 27, 1953 (Juche 42), the US imperialists knelt before the people of Korea, signing the Armistice Agreement, with arguably a victory for the Korean people, with many losses for the United States, with losses that were reportedly "2.3 fold the size of losses suffered by the US in the 4-year-long Pacific War in the period of the Second World War." In December 1955, Kim Il Sung first publicly addressed the idea of Juche, one year before Khrushchev's "secret speech," which at the time was not revisionist, although it would take on such characteristics later. Kim writes:

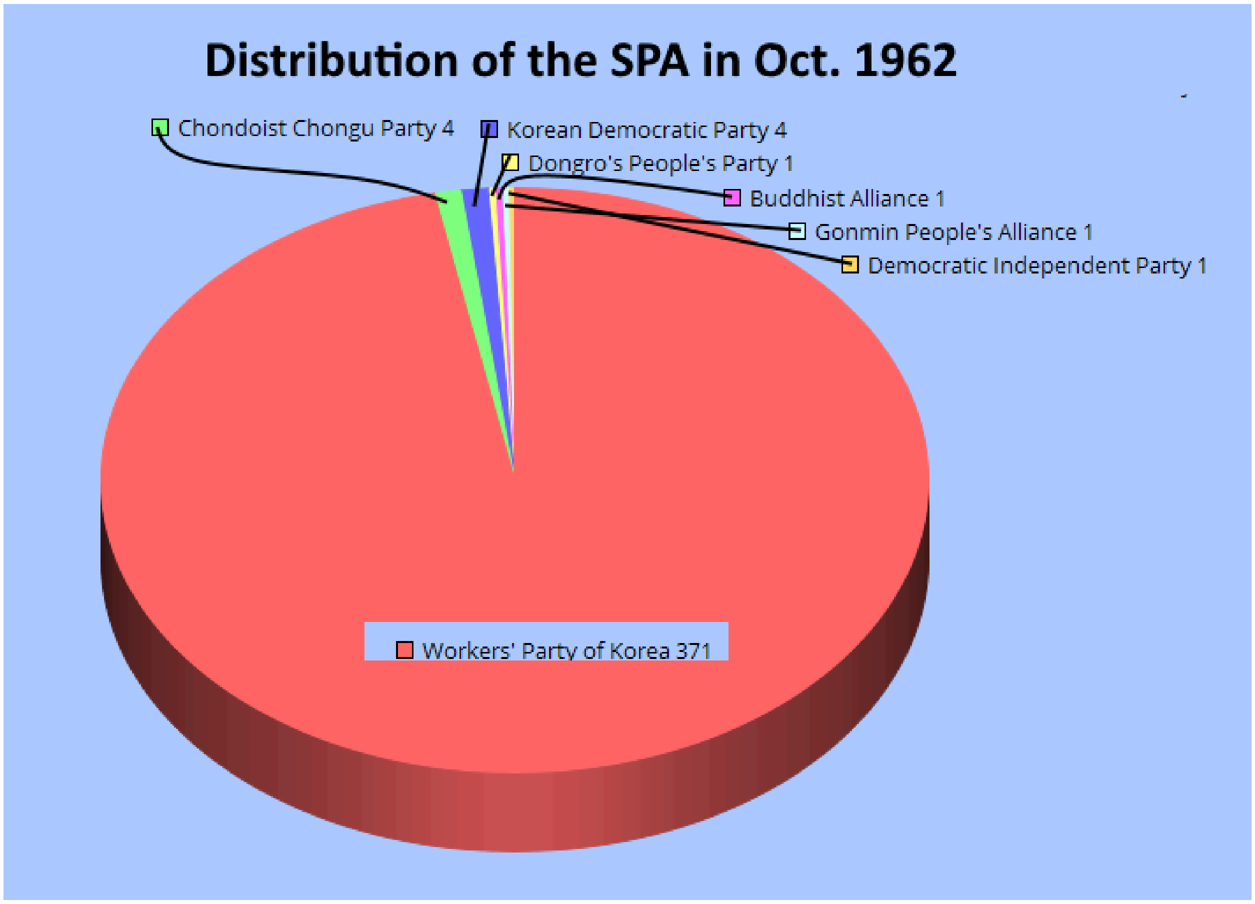
> *"...The principal shortcomings in ideological work are the failure to delve deeply into all matters and the lack of Juche. It may not be proper to say Juche is lacking, but, in fact, it has not yet been firmly established. This is a serious matter. We must thoroughly rectify this shortcoming. Unless this problem is solved, we cannot hope for good results in ideological work... This, the Korean revolution, constitutes Juche in the ideological work of our Party. Therefore, all ideological work must be subordinated to the interests of the Korean revolution...By saying that*

the ideological work of our Party lacks in Juche, I do not mean, of course, that we have not made the revolution or that our revolutionary work was undertaken by passers-by. Nonetheless, Juche has not been firmly established in ideological work, which leads to dogmatic and formalistic errors and does much harm to our revolutionary cause. To make revolution in Korea we must know Korean history and geography and know the customs of the Korean people. Only then is it possible to educate our people in a way that suits them and to inspire in them an ardent love for their native place and their motherland…As far back as the autumn of 1945, that is, immediately after liberation, we emphasized the need to study the history of our nation's struggle and to inherit its fine traditions…Today, ten years after liberation, we have all the conditions for collecting materials on our literary legacy and turning it to full use. Nevertheless, the propaganda workers remain wholly indifferent to this…One day this summer when I dropped in at a local democratic publicity hall, I saw diagrams of the Soviet Union's Five-Year Plan shown there, but not a single diagram illustrating the Three-Year Plan of our country…In compelling schoolbooks, too, materials are not taken from our literary works but from foreign ones. All this is due to the lack of Juche. The lack of Juche in propaganda work has done much harm to Party work…If we had not organized the People's Army with old revolutionary cadres as its core, what would have been the outcome of the last war? It would have been impossible for us to defeat the enemy and win a great victory under such difficult conditions…Our 20-Point Platform is the development of the Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. As you all know, the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland existed before our country was liberated…It is utterly ridiculous to think that our people's struggle against the U.S. imperialists conflicts with the efforts of the Soviet people to ease international conflicts with the efforts of the Soviet people to ease international tension…Hearing us say that it is necessary to establish Juche, some comrades might take it simply and form a wrong idea that we need not learn from foreign countries. That would be quite wrong. We must learn from the good experiences of socialist countries…It is important in our work to grasp revolutionary truth, Marxist-Leninist truth, and apply it correctly to the actual conditions of our country…we should not mechanically copy forms and methods of the Soviet Union, but should learn from its experience in struggle and Marxist-Leninist truth…Marxism-Leninism is not a dogma, it is a guide to action and a creative theory…In connection with the problem of establishing Juche I think it necessary to touch on internationalism and patriotism…Before liberation, the mere words that in the Soviet Union the working class held power and was building socialism made us yearn boundlessly for the Soviet Union where we had never been…In order to make our Party members indomitable fighters who are always optimistic about the future of the revolution, it is necessary to intensify their Marxist-Leninist education…In order to meet this great revolutionary event, the Party spirit of the Party members should be steeled; they should be educated to have a correct mass viewpoint and to have faith in victory and optimism regarding the future of the revolution."

Beyond this, in the post-war period, the country needed to rebuild itself from much destruction, led in the effort by President Kim Il Sung. As Socialist Voice, in an opinion critical of the DPRK, notes in *Marxist-Leninism Today*, the partition of the Korean Peninsula was a "product of the Cold War, which in Korea turned into a very hot war of savage proportions. Hundreds of thousands died on both sides." This piece also notes that the DPRK "developed and rebuilt itself after the devastation inflicted on it by the war." With the Korean people having to "tighten their belts but they built factories, enterprises, towns and rural villages," there was a "Three-Year Plan for the Postwar Rehabilitation and Development of the National Economy" just like in Poland, which was a success, followed by a Five-Year Plan from 1957 to 1960, with Sung saying "Let us produce more, practise economy, and overfill the Five-Year Plan ahead of schedule!" All of this makes it clear why the second session of the SPA was not until 1957 - the DPRK was in no shape to have an election in the middle of defending itself from imperialist attack during the Great Fatherland Liberation War. In this election, the Workers Party of Korea gained seats, while other parties lost seats, showing that it was applauded by the people. The pie chart below shows the distribution of the SPA after the election in August 1957, the 2nd SPA respectively, with only 75 of the 527 members of the first session re-elected, with only 215 members comprising the body. In previous elections in 1948, 1 delegate was elected per every 50,000 people, whereas in this session the Five-Year Plan was implemented.

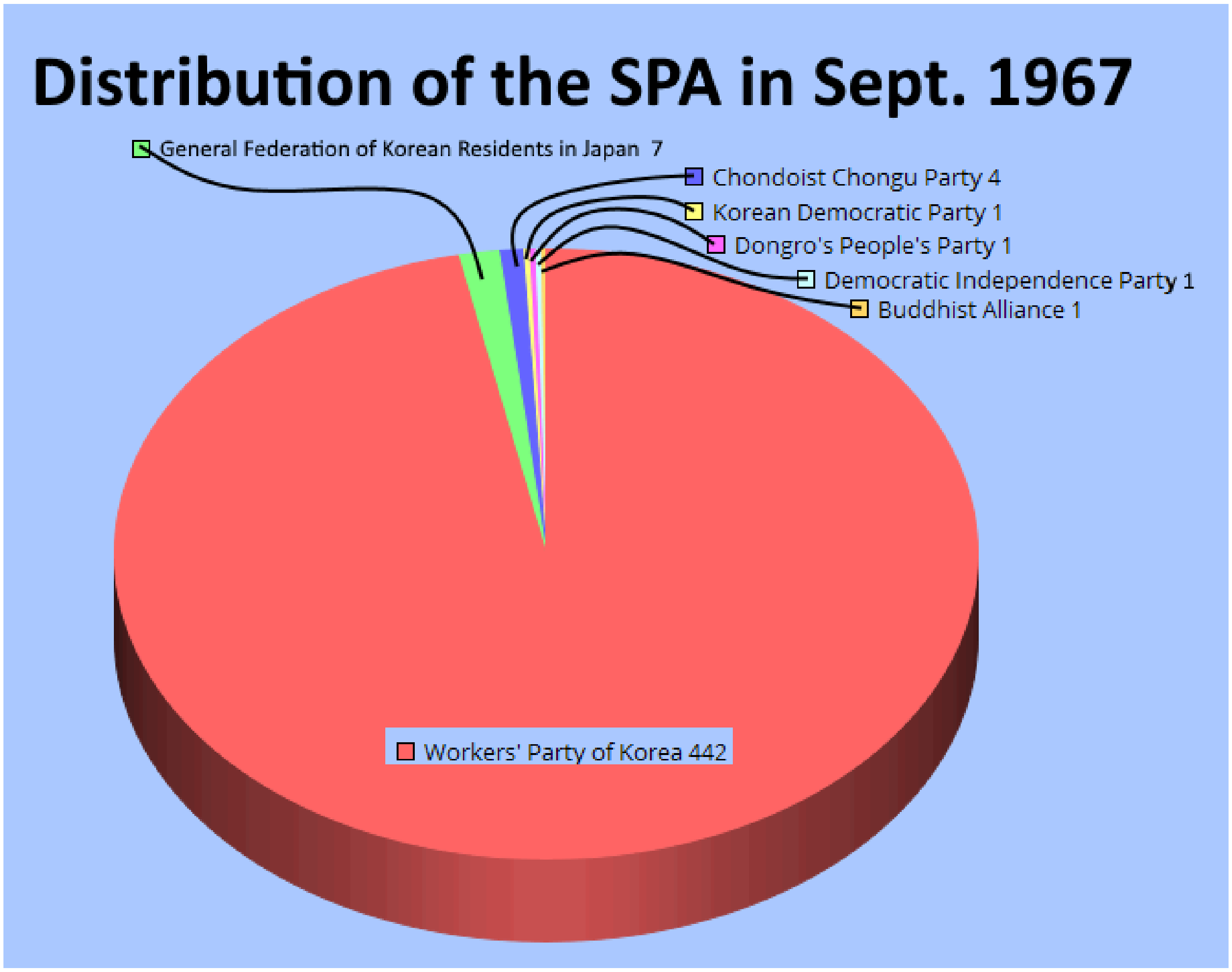


Fast forward five years and 2 months to the next legislative election, the 3rd SPA, respectively, in October 1962, which was eight days before the beginning of the Cuban Missile Crisis! By this point, as revisionist Stephen Gowans noted, the country "grew at a faster pace than the south from the 1940's to the mid-60s" and Che Guevara was so impressed after visiting Pyongyang in 1965 that he "declared north Korea to be a model to which Cuba should aspire." The SPA increased in size from 215 members to 383 members, with the WPK keeping its majority, showing that it was supported by the populace more than any of the other parties by a long shot:



Also during this session there were a number of developments, including the introduction of the single-ballot vote and representation changed to 1 delegate every 30,000 people rather than the previous electoral distribution. These were positive democratic developments which advanced the country forward. The following year there were local elections for provincial people's assemblies. In these elections, like many past and since, Kim Il-Sung was re-elected as the DPRK's president. During the elections a total of 14,303 deputies for city, county, and district positions in people's assemblies were elected, as were 70,250 in towns, neighborhoods, villages, and workers' districts, for people's assemblies, and 2,517 provincial people's assembly deputies. Compare this with the 1949 elections when 689 provincial people's assembly deputies, 5,164 city and county people's assembly deputies elected, 13,354 deputies for township people's assemblies were elected, and 56,112 deputies for town, neighborhood, village and workers' district people's assembly, were elected (*North Korea Handbook*, p. 126). A few years later in Nov. 1956, 54,279 deputies for town, neighborhood, villages and workers' district people's assemblies were elected, along with 1,009 provincial people's assembly deputies and 9,364 city and county people's assembly deputies also elected later in the month (*North Korea Handbook*, p. 126). Then three years later, in 1959, 9,759 city, county and district people's assembly deputies and 53,882 town, neighborhood, village and workers' district people's assembly deputies were elected (*North Korea Handbook*, p. 126).

Five years and one month after the 1962 election, in September 1967, the elections for the 4th SPA were held. Apart from the local elections held that year where over 300 women, out of the 3,305 delegates, were elected (*Area Handbook for North Korea*, 1969, p. 232; *North Korea Handbook*, p. 126.), the SPA, added new members, increasing from 383 members to 457. This development meant that not only were the amount of delegates keeping pace with the population, but there was full participation, with the deputies elected for a term of five years (Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee [bourgeois academics], *Communism in Korea: The society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972, 726, 793-795). During this session, a number of changes were made, including revising the DPRK's constitution and allowing the President of the country to be elected, another good development. [27] The distribution of the SPA was as the pie chart below displays colorfully, showing that the WPK gained even more support of the populace while the People's Republic Party and other organizations lost their seats as people voted in WPK deputies instead:



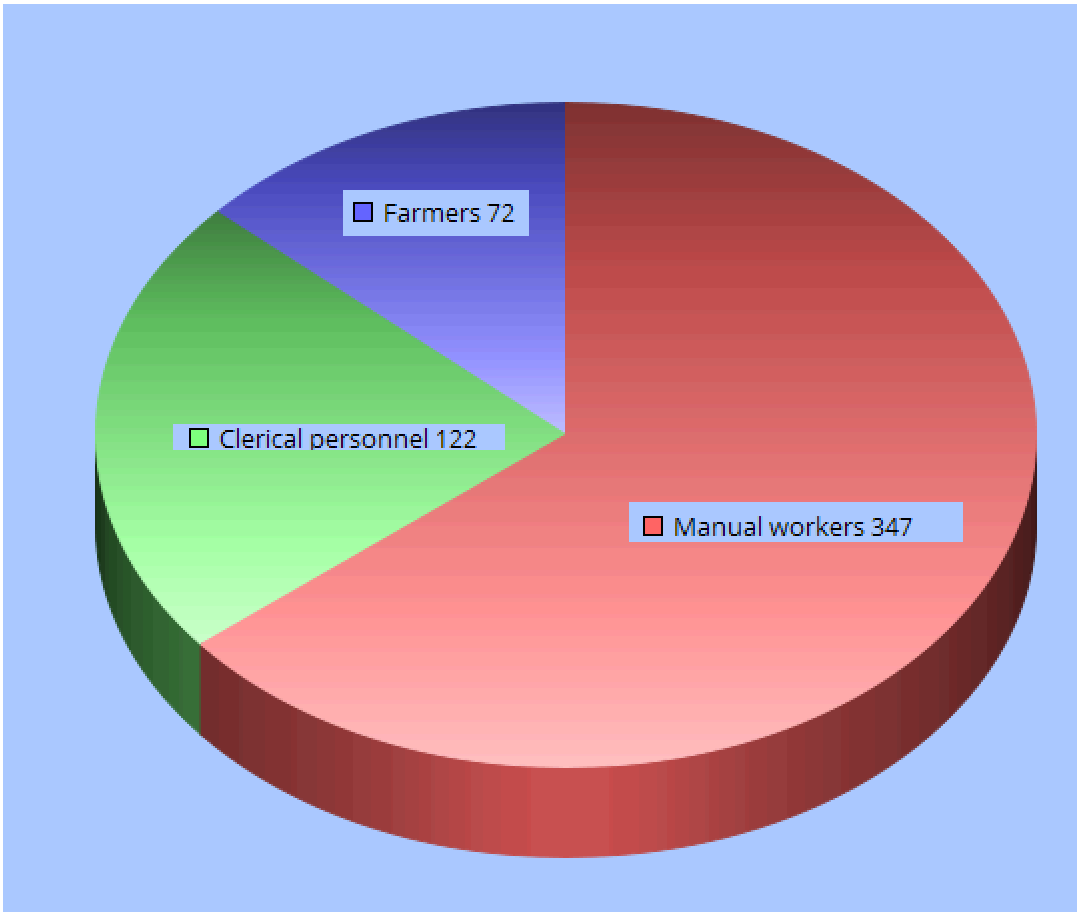
That same year, Kim Jong Il gave a "Talk to the Officials of the Central Committee of the League of Socialist Working Youth of Korea." Within this speech he argued that "young people [in Korea] are honourable activists in the vanguard of socialist construction"and that there is a "great programme for the building of socialist rural communities" beginning in the country, showing that he still believed in the strength of socialism. He also said that "the youth should take the lead in carrying out the rural technical revolution," that " appearance of our modern socialist farming villages is altering and the peasants' standard of living" and that a "youth shock-force movement is an excellent school for revolutionizing young people, by tempering them through labour and organizational life," echoing what Kim Il Sung said. He also gave a speech in 1969 about cinema in the DPRK and a speech the following year to scriptwriters. Fast forward to 1971. That year, the DPRK was often featured in the publication of The Black Panther, the newspaper of the Black left-wing party based in Oakland, the Black Panther Party. One article reprinted a speech by a Korean comrade, Pak Ung Gil, arguing that the Korean people, in the DPRK especially, are fighting to expedite their "complete victory of socialism and the cause of national unification at the forefront of the anti-imperialism, anti-U.S. imperialist struggle in direct confrontation with U.S. imperialism" and that they extend "militant solidarity to the Black Panther Party and the Negroes in the United States," with a promise of encouragement for their struggle and active support (Pak Ung Gil, "We Scathingly Condemn U.S. Imperialism for Brutal Suppression of the U.S. Black Panther Party," The Black Panther, Jan. 30, 1971, p. 13. Reprinted from The Pyongyang Times). This aligns completely with Kim Il Sung, who condemned suppression of the Black Panthers, declaring years earlier that "where there is oppression, there is always resistance. It is inevitable that the oppressed peoples should fight for their emancipation."

Later that year, the DPRK was caught in an international dispute. A KPA pilot was engaging in tests with his airplane but he had to land because of problems with his fuel tank, if I remember correctly, and the US and "South Korea" (Republic of Korea or ROK) refused to give him up ("Declaration of the Executive Secretariat of OSPAAL (Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America) on the Occasion of the Detention of a Pilot of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by the South Korean Puppet Clique," *The Black Panther*, Mar. 20, 1971, p. 14; On the same page is a Kim Il Sung poster declaring "If the U.S. imperialists provoke another aggressive war they will get nothing but corpses and death!"). Later that year, Kim Il Sung received praise from multiple sources. For one, the South Korean Party for Reunification, argued in February 1971 that he had taught them "the importance of combining violent struggles with non-violent struggle, illegal struggle with legal struggle" (South Korean Revolutionary Party for Reunification, "On the Re-Unification of the Korean Fatherland," *The Black Panther*, May 1, 1971, p. 15). The Black Panther Party's Central Committee followed the next month by commemorating Kim Il Sung's birthday and confirming the "militant solidarity between our Party and the struggling oppressed people of the U.S. and the heroic Korean people," noting the "the unnatural division of a whole people that U.S. imperialists have perpetrated" in Korea, and pledging to intensify in their "own struggle, here inside the U.S., against U.S. imperialism, fascism and racism (Central Committee of the Black Panther Party, "April 15, Birthday Greetings to Comrade Kim Il Sung, Courageous and Beloved Leader of 40 Million Korean People," *The Black Panther*, Apr. 17, 1971, p. 11).

That same year, Kim Il Sung explained to a delegation of Iraqi journalists the most important experience of the "fighting people of Korea." He started by saying that while Korea "was a colonial, semi-feudal society in the past" and had to fight off U$ imperialists, that they have, currently, "an advanced socialist system, under which all people work and live a happy life helping each other" with victories and achievements due to the leadership of the Workers' Party of Korea, and the people themselves, with dedication to the idea of Juche (not then taken on revisionist characteristics) or "expressing such a creative and independent principle and position adhered to by our Party in conducting revolutionary struggle and constructive work." He went on to say that the Party had maintained its independence, is working on "building an independent national economy," dedication to self-defense of the country from "aggressors and enemies," the innovation in the "Chollima movement" which embodies the mass line of socialist construction, and the task of driving the "U.S. imperialist aggressors out of south Korea, accomplish the national liberation revolution and realize the reunification of the country." In response to a question about the successes of the Iraqi people, who had recently engaged in a coup on July 17, 1968, led by Saddam Hussein (who would not hold presidential or other power until the late 1970s) and Salah Omar al-Ali, among others of the Socialist Ba'ath Party, Sung replied by saying that the Iraqi people had attained "national independence through their protracted arduous struggle against the domination of foreign imperialism," that "antagonism and discord between nations...are advantageous only to the imperialists and simply detrimental to the people" with a "peaceful, democratic solution of the Kurd national problem," that the government of Iraq stands "firm in the ranks of struggle against imperialism and colonialism." Sung was also asked about U$ imperial aggression in Southeast Asia. In response to that, he argued that "the expansion of the aggressive war by the U.S. imperialists in Indo-China places them in an ever more difficult position and hastens the defeat of the aggressors," by arguing that people of Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia (not referring to Khmer Rouge) have united to fight "against the U.S. imperialist aggressors...[with] the whole land of Indo-China has become a graveyard for the aggressors" and that the Korean people will assist those fighting against U.S. imperialism in Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos. His last two questions were about the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party in Iraq and the Arab people. On the first question, he said that "the Korean and Iraqi peoples are close comrades-in-arms fighting against the common enemy...part of the great unity of the Asian and African peoples against imperialism and colonialism." To the second question he declared that:

> *"the Arab people are vigorously fighting in arms against U.S. imperialism and the Israeli aggressors…The armed struggle of the Arab people against U.S. imperialism and the Israeli aggressors is a just struggle to defend national independence and dignity, restore the occupied Arab territories and accomplish the cause of liberation of the Palestinian people…The Korean people will continue to resolutely support the valiant struggle of the Palestinian people for liberating their fatherland and the struggle of the entire Arab people against Zionism and imperialist aggression and will always remain a close comrade-in-arms of the Arab people in the struggle against the common enemy…I sincerely wish the Arab people greater successes in their just struggle against U.S. imperialism and the Israeli aggressors."*

With this struggle evident, the following year there was a bout of elections, five years and one month after the 1967 election, showing the DPRK's democracy shine once more. This election for the 5th SPA may have shown a change. Apart from the supposed detente, and the local elections for People's Assemblies with 3,185 provincial people's assembly deputies, and 24,784 city, county and district people's assembly deputies elected, the 1972 elections for the SPA showed change (*The Statesman's Year-Book* 1972-73, ed. J. Paxton, p. 1123; IBP, Inc., Korea North Country Study Guide Vol. 1, p). During the session, a proposal was crafted with eight provisions about the reunification of Korean Peninsula (*North Korea Handbook*, p. 124). Despite searching across the internet, I was only able to find the breakdown of the assembly of 541 Deputies, then serving for 4 years, with citizens over the age of 17 voting, with all of these legislators proposed by the Workers' Party of Korea, not "chosen" as some would claim. In fact, about 21% of the assembly was female delegates. In December of that year, the composition of the new SPA, in terms of class, as the delegates are in every electoral contest, was broken down as follows:

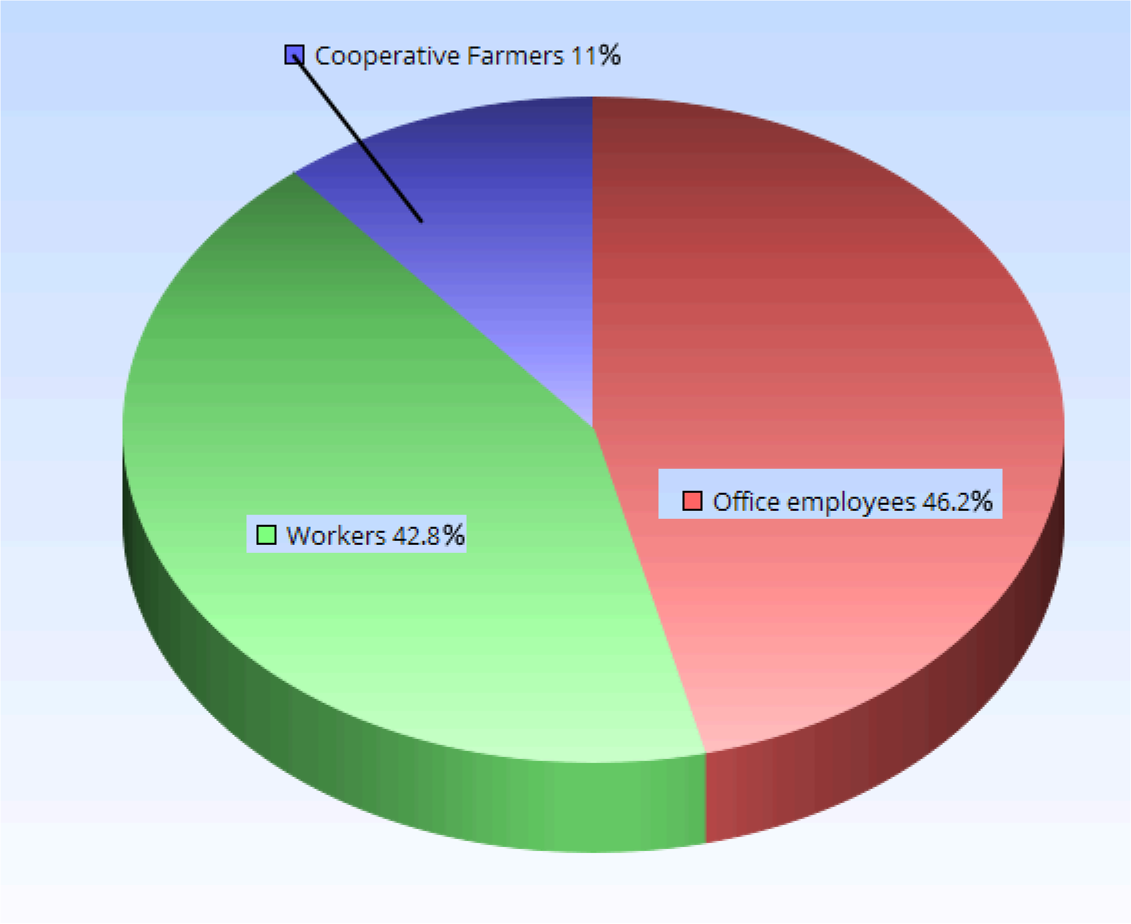


As such, the proletariat still held the sway in the SPA, which was undoubtedly positive. The same year, a new Constitution was adopted by the DPRK, describing the county as a "self-reliant socialist state...an independent socialist State...a revolutionary State" guided by the Juche idea, with authority ultimately derived from "workers, peasants, working intellectuals and all other working people" with power exercised through "the organs of State power at all levels, from the county People's Assembly to the Supreme People's Assembly" which are elected by the working class "on the principle of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot." If that's not enough, the Constitution also dedicates the state to defending and protecting "the interests of the workers, peasants, working intellectuals and all other working people," that "independence, peace and friendship are the basic ideals of the foreign policy" of the DPRK, and that the country "relies on the socialist production relations and on the foundation of an independent national economy." The Constitution goes on to describe other aspects of the DPRK. Means of production in the country "are owned by the State and social, cooperative organizations," the state's property belongs to the people, private property is defined as "property owned and consumed by individual citizen," working days are eight hours long, the minimum working age is 16 years, state shall direct the socialist economy, there is a "people's nationwide defence system" to defend against imperialists, equal rights for men and women, and socialist culture will flourish. One could say such acceptance of property was the beginning of the dive into revisionism, but still the overall aspects of the state which benefited the populace remained, with socialism as one could call it, still existing in the DPRK in 1972.

More was noted about this constitution in a 1992 meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. There, the DPRK's representative noted that the new Socialist Constitution of the DPRK was adopted on December 27, 1972, in the first session of the 5th SPA, and that the country had gone beyond its "socialist transformation of economic management" and establishment of a socialist system, by 1958, with "total eradication of exploitation of man by man, the social and class relations," with a socialist working people (p. 6 of "The Parliamentary System of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea"). He went on to say that the 1972 draft of the socialist constitution was put to debate two times in plenary meetings of the Workers' Party of Korea, the Social Democratic Party and the Chondoist Chongu Party and at the Central Committee of the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland, and then it was submitted to the SPA, adopted finally (and unanimously) by the deputies on December 27, 1972 (p. 7 of "The Parliamentary System of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea"). As a result, Korean people celebrate this day as Socialist Constitution Day every passing year. It is also worth noting the economic activity in the DPRK in 1972 as shown as an aside to an anti-DPRK article (Mitchell Lerner, "Making Sense of the 'Hermit Kingdom': North Korea in the Nuclear Age," vol. 2, issue 3, Dec. 2008, *Origins* magazine, accessed Feb. 27, 2017). While the article is horrible, the map is worth reposting:

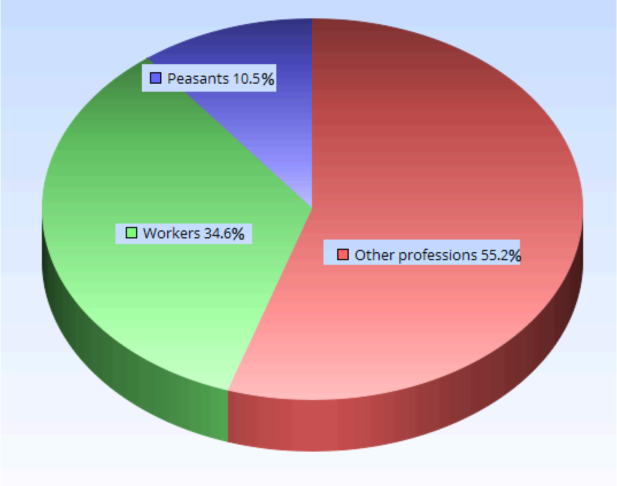
Economic Activity
INDUSTRY
Chemical
Electronics
Iron and steel
Machine
Nonferrous metals
POL refining
Shipbuilding
Textile
Thermal power
Hydroelectric power
Major fishing port
MINING
Mg Magnesite
Zn Zinc
G Graphite
W Tungsten
Fe Iron ore
Anthracite coalfield
Bituminous coalfield
Aoji-ri
Unggi
Musan
Nanam
Ch'ŏngjin
Hyesan
Yŏngan
Kimch'aek
Kanggye
Ch'ŏngsu-nodongjagu
Changjin
Pukch'ŏng
Sinp'o
Sinch'ang
Sinŭiju
Kusŏng
Hŭich'ŏn
Pakch'ŏn
Hamhŭng/Hŭngnam-kuyŏk
Yŏnghŭng
Sunch'ŏn
Munch'ŏn
Wŏnsan
Kangsŏn-nodongjagu
Kangsŏ
P'yŏngyang
Namp'o
Songnim
Sariwŏn
Haeju
Kaesŏng
Zn
Fe
Mg
G
W

Fast forward to 1975. The scant information available notes that 23,833 city, county and district people's assembly deputies were elected in February of that year (*North Korea Handbook*, p. 126; *The Statesman's Year-Book 1976-77*, ed. J. Paxton, p. 1109). Nothing else is known. Two years later there were elections across held across the DPRK once again. In the local elections, 3,244 deputies were elected in the provinces and 24,268 in the ordinary city district, urban district, and counties. [39] The national elections, in November, for the 6th SPA, was a rousing success. While the delineation of party affiliations, of the 579 deputies, cannot be found, a breakdown of the members who part of certain sects of the working class in society is worth mentioning, with the legislature also comprising of about 21% women. There is a delineation of parties shown on page 405 of *Elections in Asia and the Pacific*, but 401 deputies could not be identified by party affiliation, so it cannot be used. Still, of the data they have, it shows that the Workers' Party of Korea with the most seats. It is tabulated in the chart below:



During this SPA session, not only was a speech given to call for the strengthening of the government of the DPRK and Kim H Sung re-elected as the DPRK's president but another seven-year economic plan, starting in 1978, was gladly adopted (*North Korea Handbook*, p. 124; Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chapter 1: "Major International Developments in 1977," *Diplomatic Bluebook*, 1977). Also, a law was passed mandating that all land was "made property of the state and co-operatives, with no rights for sale or purchase." This could be said to be an action of revisionism, but it could also be seen in the converse. The session for the DPRK reportedly had five sessions, each lasting about five days, if the people at Peterson Institute for International Economics can be believed at all. This was also apparently the year that Marxism-Leninism was replaced in the Constitution by Juche, but this cannot be independently confirmed. In later years, as an article by a bourgeois scholar noted, a "Law on the Nursing and Upbringing of Children" was passed, in 1976, when there were "60,000 nurseries and kindergartens" across the country. Additionally, a Socialist Labor Law, which stipulated that "women with three or more children under 13 years of age receive 8 hours' pay for 6 hours' work," passing in 1978. Both measures were passed by the SPA members who had been duly elected in 1977.

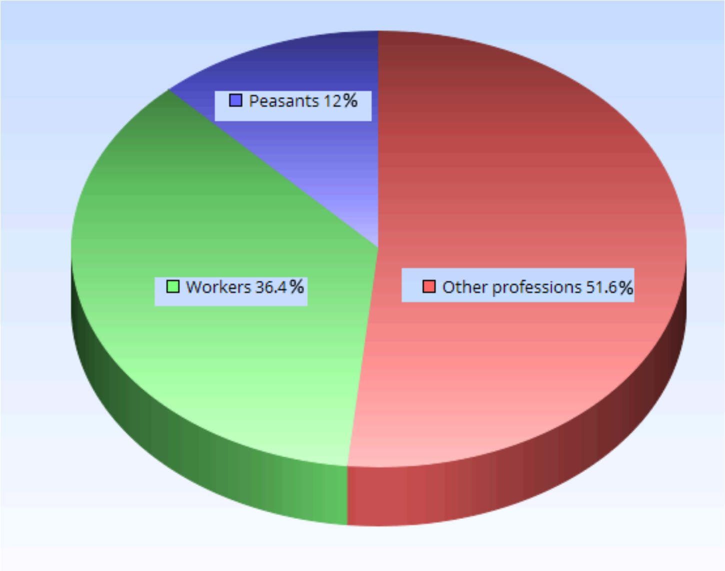
Two years later, in March 1979, in an election with full participation, 24,247 deputies were elected, representing the city, urban, and county districts (North Korea Handbook, p. 126). The same year, the autocrat in the ROK, "South" Korea, Park Chung-hee, was assassinated, resulting in a change in the DPRK's policy. As such, the DPRK opened relations with the new leftist government in Nicaragua, and revisionist China began to try to get the DPRK to implement its economic measures which opened itself to the global capitalist market to boost productive forces (Eric Talmadge, "Senior North Korean leader to attend Nicaragua inauguration," Associated Press, January 6, 2017; BBC News, "South Korea – Timeline," February 3, 2017; Junheng Li, "North Korea Offers an Opportunity for China and the U.S.," Bloomberg View, February 21, 2017). In March 1981, there were again local elections in the DPRK. Exactly, 24,191 deputies were elected for the county, urban, and city districts, along with 3,705 in the provinces and municipalities (*North Korea Handbook*). The same year, the DPRK proposed a plan to re-unify the Korean Peninsula but the ROK rejected it outright and it acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (The Statesman's Year-Book 1986-87, ed. J. Paxton (New York: MacMillian Ltd, 1986), p. 770-771; Yves Beigbeder, International Monitoring of Plebiscites, Referenda and National Elections: Self-determination and Transition to Democracy (London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1994), 49). In February 1982, Koreans went back to the polls to vote for legislators for the 7th SPA. While party breakdown is not available, of the 617 deputies elected, for four year terms, 20% of whom were women, the working class was well-represented, with other professions lumping together those who are not considered workers or peasants, seemingly including farmers, and office employees for example. The chart below visualizes this reality:



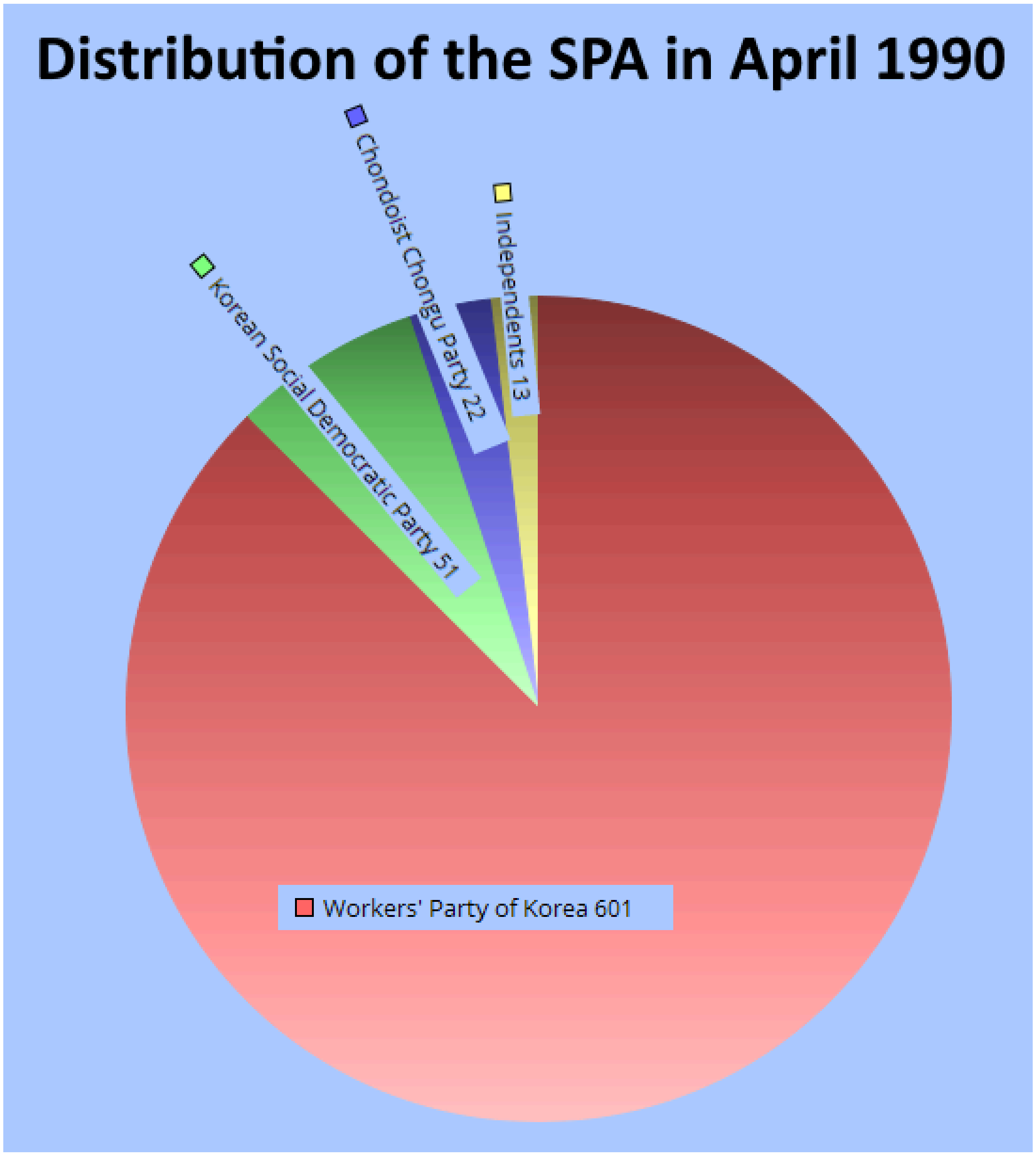
The workers and peasants (which we can say are the same as farmers), did not have control of even half of the SPA, which is worrisome. If we knew what consisted of "other professions" then an even better assessment could have been made. Still, revisionism was clearly strengthening in the DPRK. During the session there was a push for expedited self-reliance (Juche) and another attempt for peaceful reunification of the fatherland by securing a peace guarantee, with not much else known. However, it is evident that there were fantastic celebrations with Kim Il Sung turning 70 years old, new economic policies announced, and the death of Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, that year, reportedly "opened the door to a warmer Soviet-DPRK relationship (Kathryn Benken, Korea Lesson Plan "North Korea: The Dynasty of Communism," NCTA Oxford 2009, Life Skills Centers of Hamilton County; Nicholas Eberstadt, Chapter 1: "North Korea's Unification Policy-A Long, Failed Gamble," *The End of North Korea* (American Enterprise Press, 1999), reprinted in the *New York Times* books section; Andrew C. Nahm, "The Democratic People's

Republic of Korea," *The Far East and Australasia*, 34th Edition (London: Europa Publications, 2002), p.654).

Additionally, the DPRK extended its international solidarity to the state of Iran to fight in the war against Western-backed Republic of Iraq. The following year, there were again elections, with full participation by the populace. 24,562 Koreans were elected as deputies who represented cities, urban areas, and counties (*North Korea Handbook*, p. 126; Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Report Submitted to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Volume 1985 (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1986), 791, 796). Apart from the ridiculous speculation as to if the DPRK was going to "invade South Korea" that year, or accusations it engaged in terrorism in Myanmar, the second session of the 7th SPA met with Yang Hyong Sop elected as Chairman of the SPA and Rim Chun Chu as Vice-President (*The Far East and Australasia*, p. 654). The following year, the DPRK's government announced a joint-venture law where there could be capital investment from foreign nations in the country,and possibly farmers to have private plots, which some bourgeois analysts saw as an "admission" that the self-reliant posture of the country was not working. The following year, 1985, there were local elections once again, with full participation of the populace. 28,793 Koreans were elected as deputies who represented provinces, urban areas, counties, and cities (North Korea Handbook, p. 126). In November 1986, 4 years and 8 months after the previous election, ballots for the members of the 8th SPA were cast by the populace. While the sources say that the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland won the 655 seats in the SPA, with amounts of seats changing with population growth or decrease, there were undoubtedly full participation. Even with this electoral notation, there are no sources which note the breakdown of the deputies by party, but there are indications of the distribution of professions across the DPRK's assembly. The following chart indicates this:



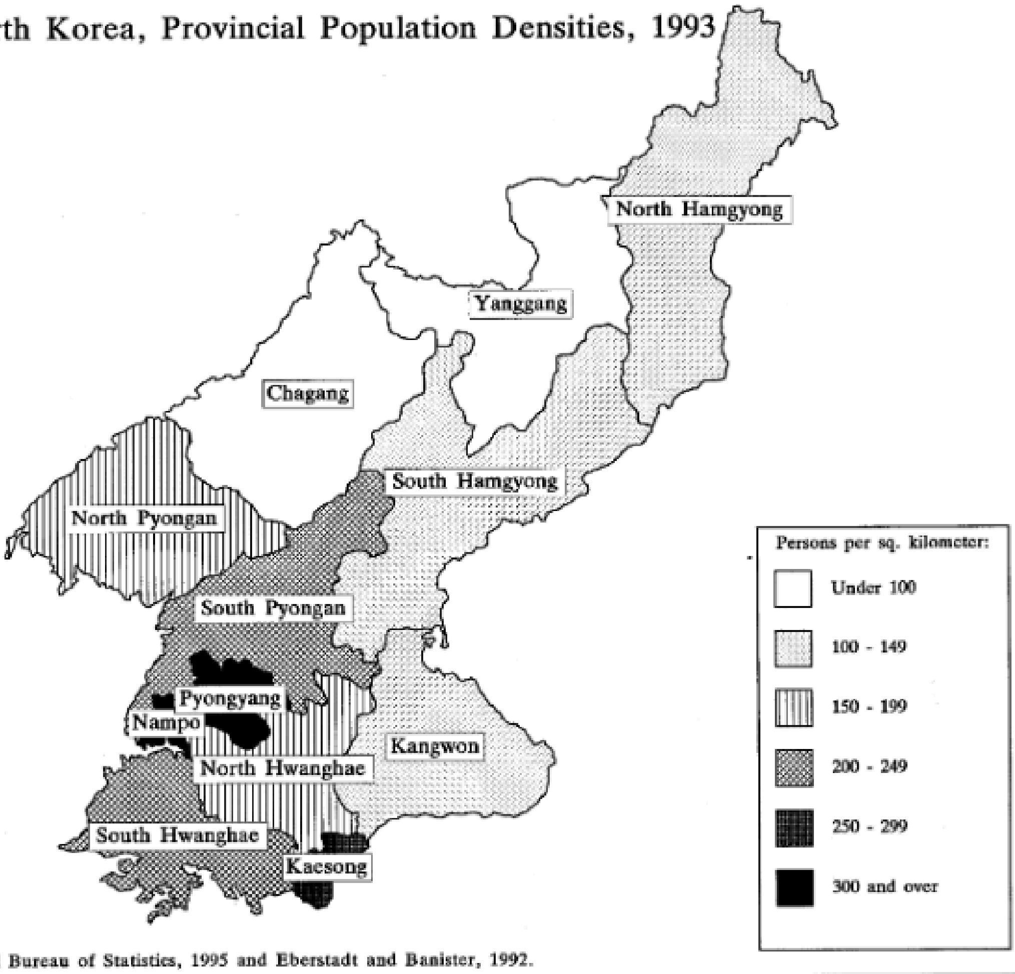
During this session, as sources note, a second seven-year plan was adopted, the first from 1978-1984, with President Kim Il-Sung pointing to the successes of the first plan and calling for "further modernization with a view to achieving a self-reliant socialist national economy." A speech calling for "the complete victory of socialism" (despite questions about how socialist the country really was) was given to the public, likely by Kim Il Sung, and the country's first nuclear reactor began operating that year. The following year, in November 1987, there were again elections in the DPRK. That year, 26,539 people were elected as local deputies, representing numerous parts of Korean society. The DPRK was accused yet again of terrorism, this time on a Korean Air Lines plane, which is passed around in the Western media, but this cannot, again, be independently confirmed.Two years after that, the Korean people cast their ballots for local elections. As such, 29,535 Koreans were elected to local and provincial people's assemblies. In April 1990, three years and six months after the previous election for the SPA, Koreans cast their ballots again. The electoral alliance, the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland, won a sweeping victory out of the 687 total seats in the 9th SPA. Over 20% of the deputies elected were women, 37% were manual workers, over 10% were farmers, and about 53% were office workers or in the military. This raises a question, yet again, about the supposed socialism of the country and indicates that revisionism was becoming even stronger than ever. The below chart shows the distribution in the national legislature of the political parties within this electoral alliance, which shows that the DPRK has a multiparty system once again:



In this ninth session, which started six months earlier than "usual," 37% of whom were workers of factories and enterprises, 10.4% who were cooperative farmers, and the rest "shared by officials or parties," there was revision of the DPRK's constitution, and Kim Jong-il elected as chairman of the National Defense Commission (P. 5 of "The Parliamentary System of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea"; *North Korea Handbook*, p. 124; Associated Press, "N. Korea Assembly Election Set for April," February 24, 1990). The DPRK, which then had a population of over 21 million with a Gross National Product of $20 billion, more than half of the population working outside agriculture, and had trading partners such as social-imperialist China, social-imperialist USSR, and capitalist Japan, was going entering into a troubled period (*North Korea Handbook*, p. 124; "Nationalism and Communism in Korea"). This wasn't wholly their fault though: with the full-throttled embrace of capitalism and fanatical revisionism by the Soviet social-imperialists, they ceased giving aid to the DPRK, leading to a faltering economy, like in many states across the world which benefited from Soviet aid ("Nationalism and Communism in Korea"; Victor Cha and Ji-Young Lee, "Politics of North Korea," *Oxford Biographies*, August 26, 2013). Even so, the DPRK stuck to their beliefs. The Soviet aid going disappearing hurt the DPRK badly because they were dependent on the Soviets for "the supply of large amounts of crude petroleum and coking coal," leading to problems in the country. The DPRK dealt with this in later years by "opening a limited area to foreign capital and securing a supply of crude petroleum and coking coal from China" and trying to build nuclear power plants ("Kim Jong Il's North Korea -An Arduous March," Spot Survey, ed. Kazunobu Hayashi and Teruo Komaki, March 1997). The following year, in November 1991, Koreans again had a chance to vote for those on the local level. With full participation of the populace, 26,074 people were elected to local and provincial assemblies.[64] With the DPRK's economy lacking aid from the Soviet social-imperialists, it faltered with the final demise of the Soviet Union on December 26, even as the Chinese social-imperialists took the place of the Soviets as the country's main trading partner. Soon, the DPRK became a member of the United Nations in September of the same year reluctantly as it argued in previous years that separate membership of the DPRK and ROK "would amount to international ratification of the 46-year partition of the Korean Peninsula" (Nick Knight and Michael Heazle, *Understanding Australia's Neighbours: An Introduction to East and Southeast Asia*, Second Edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 126; Gordon L. Rottman, *Korean War Order of Battle: United States, United Nations, and Communist Group, Naval, and Air Forces, 1950-1953* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 149; David E. Sanger, "North Korea Reluctantly Seeks U.N. Seat," *New York Times*, May 29, 1991; BBC News, "North Korea profile – Timeline," February 24, 2017; *North Korea Handbook*, p. 321; PBS, "End of a Superpower," North Korea-Suspicious Minds, January 2003; Jae-Cheon Lim, *Kim Jong-il's Leadership of North Korea* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 17-18, 24, 58, 94-96, 98-99. ROK was admitted as a UN member the same year as the DPRK. *Chuch'e* idea mentioned in some areas). This action was the action of a desperate government, one which had accepted revisionism and sided with the Soviet social-imperialists, not one that was "isolated" from the world.

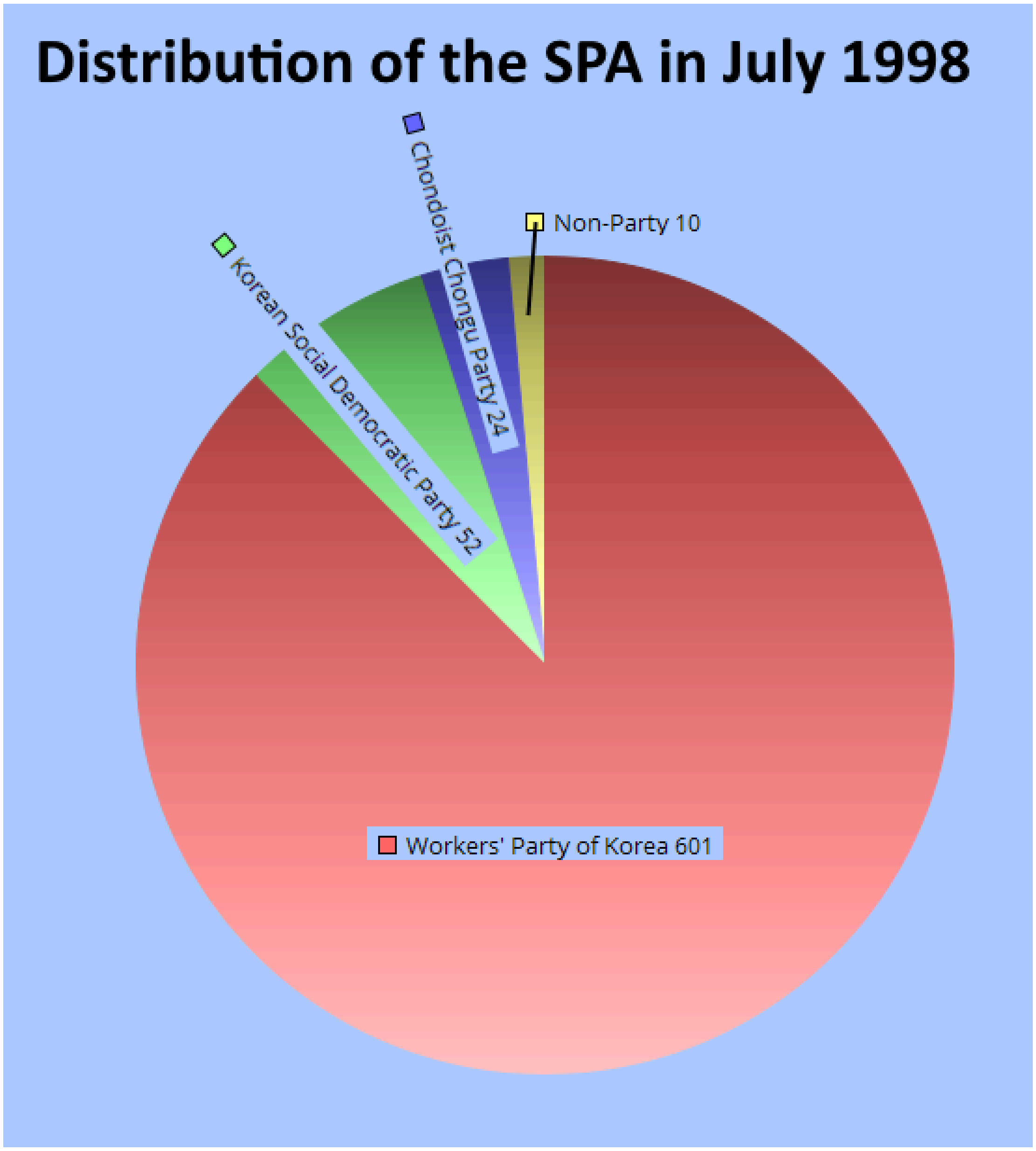
Two years later, in November, thousands of Koreans were elected to local government bodies. Specifically, 2,520 Koreans were elected to provincial and local people's assemblies this year. That year, on page 19 of an October 1997 US Census report, which was strongly anti-DPRK, the information by the DRPK Central Bureau of Statistics, was released for U$ policymakers, not the general populace of the United States of course. This census, regardless of the claims by jingoistic neoconservative economists like Nicholas Eberstadt, showed that 20.5 million people were living the DPRK, with roughly 9.6 million who were male and approximately 10.8 million who were female. Additionally, a broad majority of the population was under age 59, with about 8.4 million under the age of 59. The below map, from page 38 of the US Census report previously cited shows population densities in the DPRK in 1993, proving that the pictures of the Korean Peninsula at night which are used to say that the country is "primitive" and "uncivilized" is clearly imperialist propaganda:

Map 1. North Korea, Provincial Population Densities, 1993


North Hamgyong
Yanggang
Chagang
South Hamgyong
North Pyongan
South Pyongan
Pyongyang
Nampo
North Hwanghae
Kangwon
South Hwanghae
Kaesong
Persons per sq. kilometer:
Under 100
100 - 149
150 - 199
200 - 249
250 - 299
300 and over

Source: DPRK Central Bureau of Statistics, 1995 and Eberstadt and Banister, 1992.

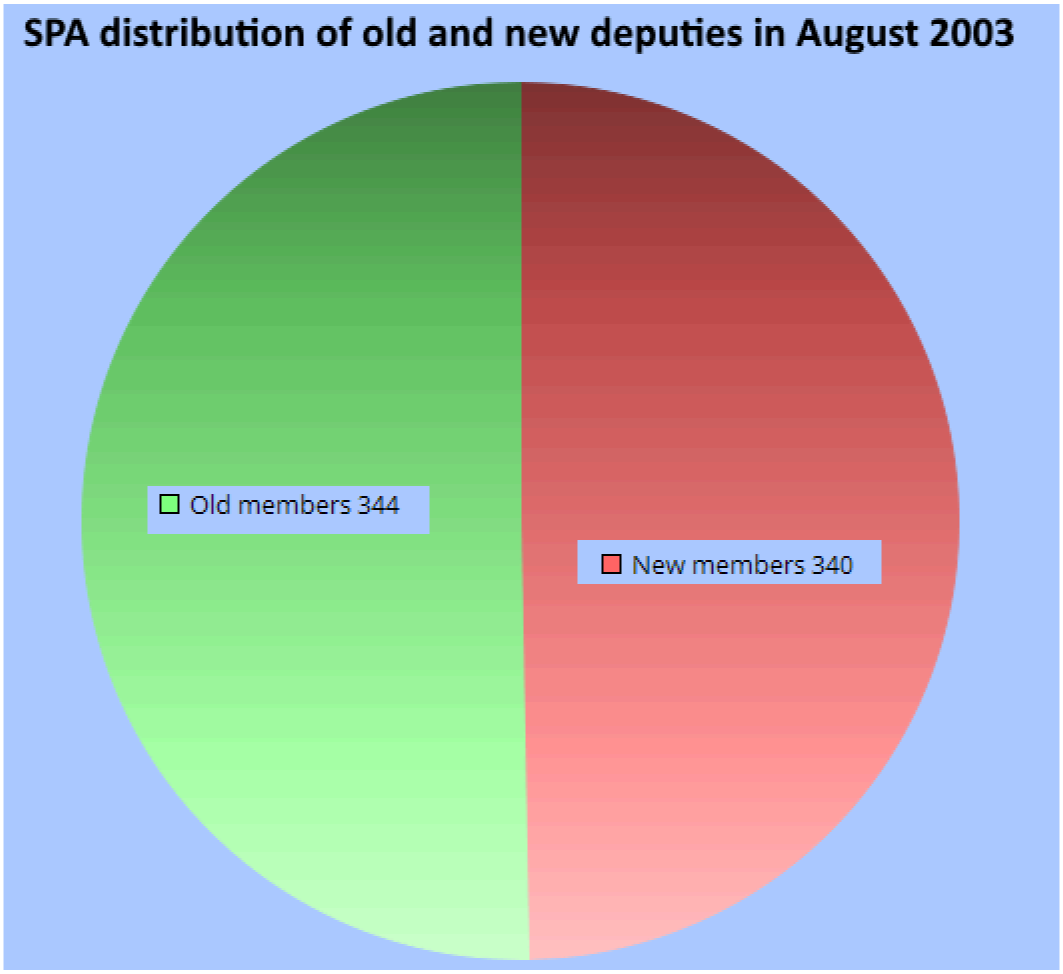
In July 1998, eight years and 3 months after the 1990 election, Koreans expressed themselves at the ballot box once again. With full participation in the elections for the 10th SPA, General Secretary Kim Jong Il elected as a deputy, even as the country was not as "socialist" as it portrayed itself in signs and propaganda (KCNA, "Rodong Sinmun on successful election of deputies to SPA," July 1998; CNN, "North Korean parliament seen set to name Kim president," August 20, 1998; Times Wire Reports, "Kim Jong Il Election Likely Steppingstone," *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1998). Koreans voted for "...officials, servicemen, workers, farmers and working intellectuals," with there also being "mobile ballot boxes available to those electors who were not able to go to the polls due to old ages and diseases," with celebrations of the day of voting (KCNA, "Korean voters participate in SPA election," July 27, 1998; KCNA, "Kim Jong Il elected to SPA," July 27, 1998; KCNA, "100 percent vote for candidates," July 27, 1998). Even the hard-nosed bourgeois scholars in the West had to admit that in this election, Koreans elected "443 new members, including 107 active duty military members" (Daniel Pinkston, "North Korea's 11th Supreme People's Assembly Elections," *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, July 1, 2003; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Report: North Korea," 1998). In the election, the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland had a wonderful and sweeping victory once again, showing that they have support of the masses (*Elections in Asia and the Pacific*, p. 406). The below chart shows how this victory played out in the distribution of the 687 deputies, 138 of whom are women, 215 who are manual workers, and 64 who were farmers, not to mention those of other professions, raising question of how representative of the populace the SPA was:



During the session, Kim Jong-il was re-elected as chairman of the National Defense Commission and DPRK's constitution, which became the Kim Il-Sung Constitution, was revised (*North Korea Handbook*, p. 124; Times Wire Reports, "Kim Jong Il Election Likely Steppingstone," *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1998). The new constitution gave more authority to the National Defense Commission, abolished the post of President, and asserted a continuing strong direction of the state. After this, Kim Jong-il removed 16 of the country's "23 main economic bureaucrats," and approved plans for "economic reforms that were finally implemented in July 2002" and the SPA passed legislation on "special economic zones, copyrights, arbitration, foreign direct investment, and foreign trade." Still, even with such further capitalist concessions to the foreign and domestic bourgeoisie while hurting the Korean proletariat, Freedom House scowled about the change in the constitution, renamed the "Kim Il-sung Constitution," declaring with anger that "private property ownership is banned" (Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Report: North Korea," 1998).

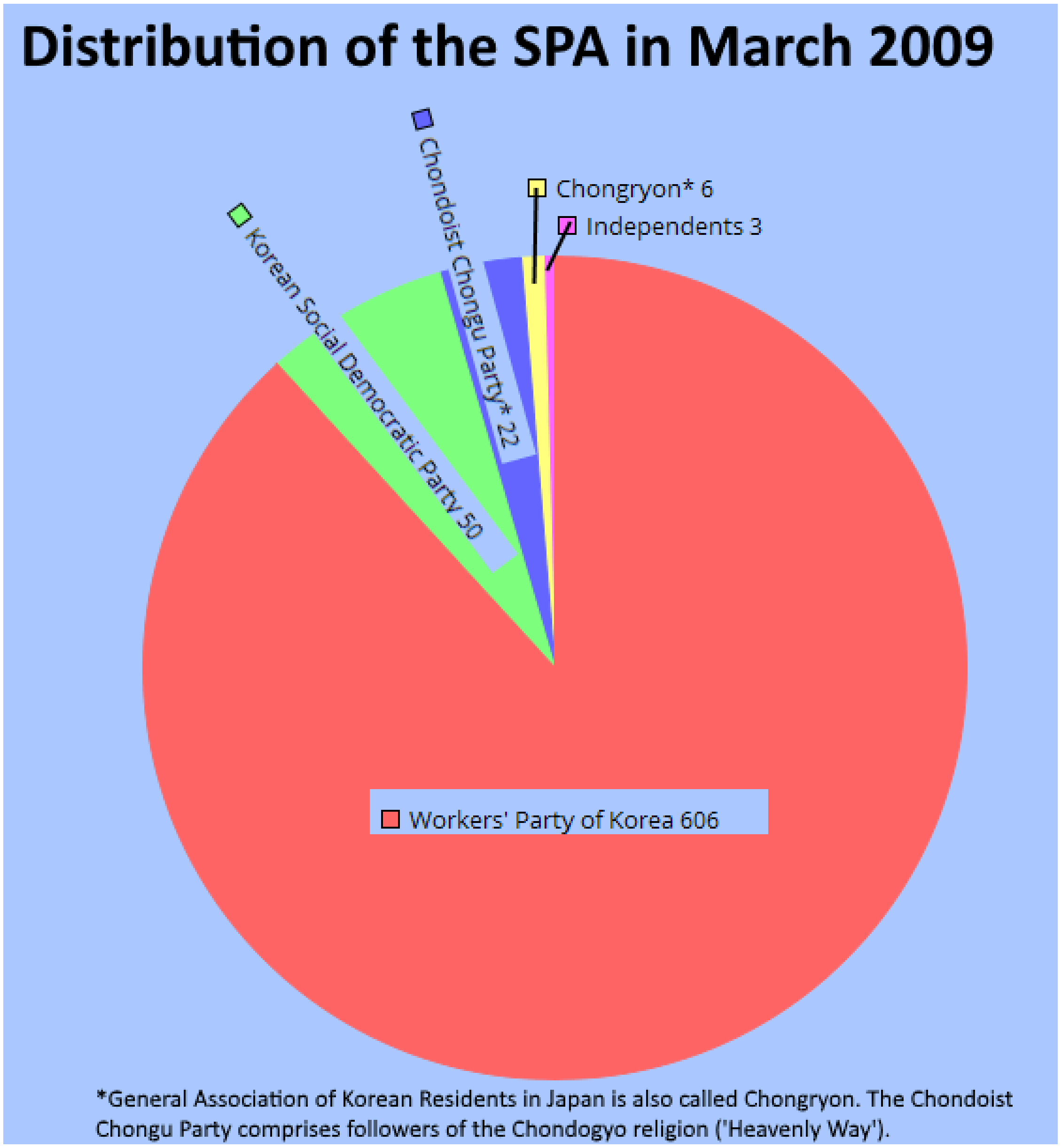
In March of the following year, there were elections on the local government level. The result was that the Korean people chose, with their ballots, 29,442 workers, farmers, intellectuals, and military staff, who became deputies of local people's assemblies, all of whom had four year terms (Graham Hassall, Cheryl Saunders, *Asia-Pacific Constitutional Systems* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 117; *North Korea Handbook*, p. 126. It was NOT the first year local elections were held in the country as deluded Western media claim, but rather that the timeline between local elections changed from every 2 years to an interval of every 4 years. Some sources noted that the SPA Presidum let citizens know about elections on January 26 and they voted by March 5-6, a pretty quick turnaround (Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea's July 19 Local Elections Dispel ROK Allegations of Public Unrest," *38 North*, August 6, 2015). The same year, not only did ROK ships sink a KPA (Korean People's Army) torpedo beat, but the DPRK declared a new demilitarized zone and thousands of workers in Seoul protested "government plans to privatize state-run power, gas, financial firms" while the DPRK seemed to "open" its economy to foreign investment, a further capitalist concession, strengthening the domestic and foreign bourgeoisie (World Atlas, "South Korea History Timeline," 2016; accessed March 2, 2017; Sheryl Wudunn, "South Korea Sinks Vessel From North In Disputed Waters," *New York Times*, June 15, 1999; Associated Press, "North Korea Opening (Gasp!) a Casino, July 31, 1999; Autoweek, "Yes, even North Korea has its own luxury car brand," July 13, 2015; Nicholas D. Kristof, "South Korean Vessel Hits Boat From North During Standoff," *New York Times*, June 10, 1999; Andrei Lankov, "N Korea: Not so 'Stalinist' after all," *Al Jazeera*, April 2014). In more positive news, records showed that about 765,000 Koreans were attending kindergarten, over 1.5 million were in primary school, and over 2.1 million in secondary school, along with 37,000 kindergarten teachers, 69,000 primary school teachers, and 113,000 secondary school teachers (Daniel Schwekendiek, *A Socioeconomic History of North Korea* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2011), 70-74, 81, 83. By 2002, the DPRK would start mobile phone services in the country). From this you can also see that college is also open to all, and that they are still fighting for increased gender equity in their high education system, which still had too many male professors.

Fast forward to 2003. In the elections that year, in August, there was full participation by the Korean populace in electing the 11th SPA, with 687 deputies elected, with the government seeing this as an expression of trust and support in them (it was that exactly) and "a manifestation of our army and people's steadfast will to consolidate the people's power as firm as a rock and accomplish the revolutionary cause of Juche under the guidance of the Workers' Party of Korea" (KCNA, "Kim Jong Il Elected to SPA," August 4, 2003; KCNA, "Foreigners Visit Polling Stations," August 4, 2003; KCNA, "Results of SPA election Announced," August 2003; Ian Jeffries, *North Korea: A Guide to Economic and Political Developments*, p. 392, 452; Daniel Pinkston, "North Korea's 11th Supreme People's Assembly Elections," *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, July 1, 2003; Reuters, "North Korea Hails 100 Percent Poll Support for Leader Kim Jong Il," July 4, 2003). During the voting, not only where mobile ballot boxes again provided for "those who were not able to go to the polls due to illness or old age" but most polling booths had posters and national flags, the former saying, for example "Let's participate in the voting for deputies to the People's Assembly and give our support to them!" While Westerners still said the elections weren't fair, there is no doubt that women made up 20% of the membership of the SPA, and laws were passed to protect people with disabilities, "ensuring equal access for persons with disabilities to public services" as the U$ State Department even had to admit. Later on in the 11th SPA, Kim Jong Il was re-elected as Chairman of the DPRK's National Defense Commission. The same year, there were local elections with 26,650 "officials, workers, peasants and intellectuals" elected to municipal, city, and county people's assemblies. Apart from the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, nearly half of the legislature's members were replaced! (KCNA, "Election Returns Announced," August 2003; The People's Korea, "DPRK Holds Election of Local and National Assemblies," August 2003). The following chart shows this to be the case:



Apart from a predictable Pew Poll that year which said that "more than three-in-four (77%) Americans see the current government in North Korea as a great or moderate danger to Asia," showing that Orientalist views are strong inside the murderous empire, the DPRK made a bold move. They withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003, and later calls for denuclearization of Korean peninsula (*Korea North Mining Laws and Regulations Handbook*, Vol.

1 (USA: International Business Publications, 2011), 40; *Double Trouble: Iran and North Korea as Challenges to International Security*, ed. Patrick M. Cronin (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), p. 166). Jump ahead to 2006. That year, the elite Council of Foreign Relations claimed that the DPRK's government had begun to "introduce aspects of capitalism into the economy." While they made this conclusion, they also admitted that these reforms were barely anything. Even so, they were another capitalist concession, which benefited the domestic bourgeoisie, the foreign bourgeoisie (mostly from China), and hurt the proletariat. The following year, the Korean people again expressed their democratic desires at the ballot box. Specifically, 27,390 "officials, workers, farmers and intellectuals" were elected to provincial, city, and county people's assemblies. Two years later, in March 2009, Koreans voted for candidates for the 12th SPA, with posters reminding the populace of the importance of voting, how it is a civic duty. While some in the bourgeois Western media, apart from mocking the election as "anti-democratic," predicted it would be part of a "wider shake-up of the country's leadership" and speculated why the election had been delayed from 2008 to this year, saying it could have been because of the ill-health of Kim Jong-il, few of them recognized that 324, of the 687 deputies in the legislature, were replaced (BBC News, "N Korea announces March election," January 7, 2009; Kev Cho, Heejin Koo, "North Korea Holds Parliamentary Elections Amid Rising Tensions," *Bloomberg*, March 7, 2009; Choe Sang-Hun, "Amid a Vote, North Korea Awaits Clues to Its Future," *New York Times*, March 8, 2009; AFP, "N Korea's Kim wins parliamentary seat: official media," March 9, 2009). In the election, which had, basically, full participation of the populace, deputies were elected for five-year terms, including Kim Jong-Il, but not his son Kim Jong-Un, and the country rightly rejecting any push for "economic liberalisation" in the country, rolling back "moderate economic reforms instituted in 2002" (Reuters, "N.Korea vote may point to Kim successor," March 8, 2009; Sohn Jie-Ae, "Kim secures seat after winning all the votes," *CNN*, March 9, 2009; AFP, "North Korea ends registration for upcoming election," March 5, 2009; ABC News (Australia), "Kim Jong-il's son not among N Korea election winners," March 10, 2009; BBC News, "N Korea announces March election," January 7, 2009). This was a positive action, but the existing revisionism was still left in place, benefiting the existing bourgeoisie in the country, regardless of how small it may have been. Apart from this, and claims of disruptions in the elections, by anti-DPRK media, possibly indicating machinations of Western imperialists, numerous "technocrats and financial experts" were elected, 107 women were elected, Mr. Choe Thae Bok was elected as a speaker of the assembly, and Kim Jong-il as the Chairman of the National Defense Commission. [84] Again, this raised the question about socioeconomic classes within the country itself, with the possibility of a growing middle class at this point. The distribution of the 12th SPA, of which 107 deputies were women, 116 deputies were soldiers, 75 deputies were workers, and 69 deputies were farmers, showing that the military was gaining even more strength in the country than before:



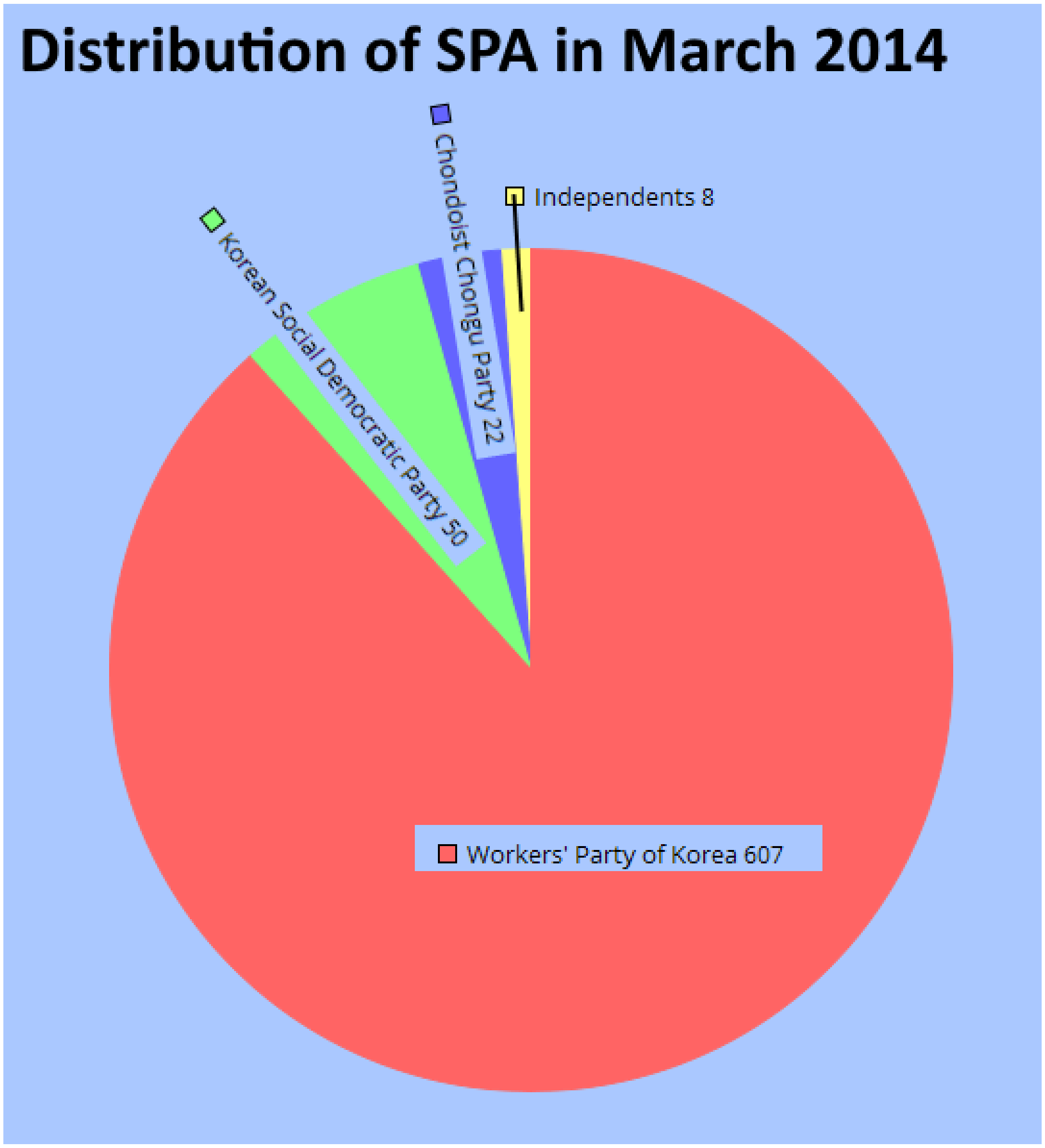
The same year, it was evident that "export-oriented subsectors such as mining and metals" showed the greatest economic activity, as noted by a research institute which made bourgeois conclusions. There was also a meeting between DPRK and Chinese delegations later in 2009 to continue their strong bilateral relations, and more stable food prices as even bourgeois sources had to admit. The warm relations between the DPRK and Chinese social-imperialists was understandable but also led to further revisionist distortion in the country itself. Two years later, in July 2011, there were local elections with fanfare. Songs reverberated across the country and flags fluttered over polling stations which were crowded with voters (BBC News, "North Korea elections: What is decided and how?," July 19, 2015; AP, "North Korea begins local elections amid succession," July 14, 2011 (early version of article on Asia Correspondent site); "DPRK unveils 2011-7-24 election posters," North Korean Economic Watch (anti-DPRK site).) Some candidates, such as an engineer named Jim Song Un, pledged to "live up to the expectations of the people who voted for me and become a true servant of the people," and said that he would help build "an economically powerful nation" (Sam Kim, "North Korea holds local elections amid succession," *Associated Press*, July 24, 2011). Additionally, in these elections, Kim Jong Un was elected as one of the 28,116 deputies who took their seats in local assemblies, which meet various times a year to approve budgets, endorse leaders of the Workers' Party of Korea, and a myriad of other duties (Agence France-Presse, "North Korean elections draw 99.97% turnout, says state media," July 19, 2015. Reprinted in *The Guardian).* Later that year, Kim Jong-un, was formally named as the supreme commander of DPRK's military (BBC News, "North Korea names Kim Jong-un army commander," Dec. 31, 2011). The same year, two analyses of the DPRK's economics were put forward. Once was by investopedia which noted that the country's economy was hit hard with the demise of the Soviet Union, with a fall in total production, but that there was a recovery after 1999, continuing to 2005, a downturn in 2006, then positive growth since 2011(Prableen Bajpai, "How the North Korea Economy Works," *Investopedia*, January 30, 2015). Of course, this is by their capitalistic economics, so their measurements could be skewed. Neoconservative, and jingoist, economist Nicholas Eberstadt, of the American Enterprise Institute complained most of all (Nicholas Eberstadt, "What is wrong with the North Korean economy," American Enterprise Institute, July 1, 2011). While agreeing with the "severe economic shock" the country faced after the demise of the Soviet Union, he claimed widely that the country had gone into a "catastrophic decline," had a "mass famine," complained that the country is in "principle a planned Soviet-type economy" about the "military burden" put on the economy, the country's "unrelenting war against its own consumers." If that wasn't enough, he claimed that the economy was "dysfunctional," said that effort of the country to "open" and "Reform" have "ultimately ended in failure" and that the economy of the country will "remain the black hole in the Northeast Asian economy." Clearly, Eberstadt is just another tool of Western imperialism, bashing those countries who have economic systems different from the West, saying that they are just not right in his eyes.

In 2012, there were a number of other developments. For one, Kim Jong-Il was named as "eternal chairman" of the National Defense Commission, along with being elected as the First Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and chairman of the Central Military Commission, there were a number of "approved amendments to the country's constitution" as *Xinhua* noted. When he was elected, at the fourth conference of the party in its history, as First Secretary of the WPK, fellow party members vowed to follow the ideas of Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un's leadership to develop their country, while they demonstrated "the revolutionary will of the people to accomplish the songun (military-first) revolutionary cause under the leadership of Kim Jong Un." Broadly, "section 2 of Chapter 6 and Articles 91, 95 and 100-105, 107, 109, 116, 147 and 156 of the Constitution in line with the institution of the new post of first chairman of the NDC" (National Defense Commission) were revised (Stephan Haggard, Luke Herman, and Jaesung Ryu, "The Supreme People's Assembly and "Cabinet Responsibility": An Economic Reform Debate?," Peterson Institute for International Economics, April 21, 2012; Yonhap News Agency, "(LEAD) N. Korea to convene unusual assembly session Sept. 25," September 5, 2012). While some speculated on economic reforms, the constitution did not fulfill their wishes (K.J. Kwon, "North Korea proclaims itself a nuclear state in new constitution," *CNN*, May 31, 2012; NTI, "North Korea Updates Nuclear Status in Constitution," May 30, 2012; Staff Reporter, "North Korea's New Constitution Proclaims Itself a Nuclear Nation," *International Business Times*, May 31, 2012; AFP, "New North Korea constitution proclaims nuclear status," May 31, 2012). In the most recent iteration of the Constitution (revised again in 2013 and 2016), still called the "Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il Constitution," it mentions that Kim Il Sung helped make the country a "nuclear state" and "unchallengable military power" in the preamble, with no other mention of it in the rest of the constitution whatsoever. On April 12, 2012, Kim Jong Un gave a rousing speech in Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung Square, which some thought was a call for the beginning of "China-style economic reform" in the DPRK, as part of "decisive transformation" he was calling for (Stephan Haggard, Luke Herman, and Jaesung Ryu, "The Supreme People's Assembly and "Cabinet Responsibility": An Economic Reform Debate?," *Peterson Institute for International Economics*, April 21, 2012; Bill Powell, "Is Kim Jong Un Preparing to Become North Korea's Economic Reformer?," *Time*, April 19, 2012; Yonhap News, "North Korea, Kim Jong Eun First Discourse 'No Work' Regulation," April 20, 2012). A rough transcription of the speech, noted that part of this was true, but there was also nationalism intertwined into his brand of Korean revisionism:

> "*…Today, we proceed with a grand military parade to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung…[and] let the whole world know about the splendor of the [so-called] socialist powerful state…I express my respect to the anti-Japanese revolutionary patriotic martyrs and the people's army patriotic martyrs, who sacrificed their invaluable lives for the fatherland's independence and the people's liberation…I express gratitude to foreign friends, who are extending their positive support to the just cause of our people…the very appearance of our nation a century ago was a small and weak, pitiful colonial nation that had to endure flunkeyism and national ruin as its fate…Great Comrade Kim Il Sung early on elucidated the philosophical principle that the gun barrel is the life of the nation and also victory of the revolution, and founded the Korean People's Revolutionary Army…[our country has] the status of a world-class militarily powerful state through the ever-victorious military-first politics…Military technological supremacy is not a monopoly of imperialists any more…Comrades, today we are standing at the watershed of history, when a new chuch'e century begins….At the historic fourth Party Representatives Conference and the fifth session of the 12th Supreme People's Assembly that took place a few days ago, great Comrade Kim Jong Il was held in high esteem…This is an indication of the steadfast will of our party, army, and people to inherit and complete to the end the chuch'e revolutionary cause…The farsighted strategy of our revolution and ultimate victory lie here in directly proceeding along the path of independence, the path of military-first, and the path of socialism unfolded by the great Comrade Kim Il Sung and Comrade Kim Jong Il…It is our party's resolute determination to let our people who are the best in the world — our people who have overcome all obstacles and ordeals to uphold the party faithfully — not tighten their belts again and enjoy the wealth and prosperity of [so-called] socialism as much as they like…We will have to embark on the comprehensive construction of an economically powerful state by kindling more fiercely, the flames of the industrial revolution of the new century and the flames of South Hamgyong Province…Our cause is just and the might of Korea that is united with truth is infinite…I will be a comrade-in-arms who always shares life and death and destiny with comrades on the road of the sacred*

military-first revolution and will fulfill my responsibility for the fatherland and revolution by upholding Comrade Kim Jong Il's behest…Move forward toward the final victory."

In March 2014, the Korean people went to the polls, to elect those who served in the 13th SPA assembly, with the next elections in 2019. While the elections were declared a "formality" by the Western media, they again distort the reality (Al Jazeera, "North Korea to hold parliamentary elections," January 8, 2014; Alstair Gale, "North Korea's Fake Election," *Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 10, 2014; Rob Williams, "North Korea election: Kim Jong-un faces the vote – but of course there's only one name on the ballot box," *The Independent*, 2014; Choe, Sang-Hun, "North Korea Uses Election To Reshape Parliament," The New York Times, March 10, 2014; BBC News, "North Korea's Kim Jong-un in 'unanimous poll win'," March 10, 2014; BBC News, "North Koreans vote in rubber-stamp elections," March 9, 2014; Harriet Alexander, "North Koreans 'vote' in elections – singing, dancing and reciting poetry," *The Telegraph*, March 9, 2014; Peter Shadbolt, "North Korean election provides clues to reclusive Stalinist state," *CNN*, March 7, 2014; Al Jazeera, "No votes cast against Kim Jong-un in poll," March 10, 2014; Danielle Wiener-Bronner, "Yes, There Are Elections in North Korea and Here's How They Work," *The Atlantic*, March 6, 2014; Emily Rauhala, "North Korea Elections: A Sham Worth Studying," *Time*, March 10, 2014; IFES election Guide: North Korea, 2014; Associated Press, "North Korea's Kim Jong-un elected to assembly without single vote against," *The Guardian*, March 10, 2014). In fact, with full participation of the populace, of the 687 deputies elected, 112 of them were women, about 55 percent of serving parliamentarians "were reportedly renewed," the ambassador to revisionist China, Ji Jae Ryong, and Kim Jong Un joined the SPA as deputies (KCNA, "Report of Credentials Committee of Deputies to 13th SPA," April 9, 2014; Voice of Russia, "Kim Jong-un unanimously elected to North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly," March 10, 2014). The below chart shows the distribution of deputies in the 13th SPA:



During the 13th SPA, Mr. Choe Thoe Bak was re-elected as speaker/chairman of the assembly, Mr. Pak Pong Ju was elected as the Premier of the Cabinet and Kim Jong Un was re-confirmed as First Chairman of the National Defence Commission, along with other appointments by Kim Jong Un (Michael Madden, "The NDC's Fall Lineup: Results of the 13th SPA," *38 North*, October 6, 2014; Rodong Sinmun, "1st Session of 13th SPA of DPRK held," April 10, 2014; KCNA, "Panel Committees of SPA of DPRK Elected," April 9, 2014; KCNA, "Director of Supreme Public Prosecutors Office Appointed, President of Supreme Court Elected," April 9, 2014; KCNA, "Members of DPRK Cabinet Appointed," April 9, 2014; KCNA, "Presidium of Supreme People's Assembly of DPRK Elected," April 9, 2014; KCNA, "DPRK National Defence Commission Elected at SPA Session," April 9, 2014; KCNA, "Kim Jong Un Elected First Chairman of NDC of DPRK," April 9, 2014). In later sessions, there was also, continuing implementation of compulsory education in the DPRK by improving educational conditions in the state as part of a plan proposed by Kim Jong Un to construct a "world power of socialist education in the 21st century," a report on the previous years budget which pushed forward "the economic construction [of the DPRK] and the building of nuclear force," and reinforcing the role of the Workers' Party of Korea (KCNA, "Report on Implementation of State Budget for 2013 and State Budget for 2014," April 9, 2014; KCNA, "Meeting of Political Bureau of C.C., WPK Held under Guidance of Kim Jong Un," April 8, 2014; bourgeois sources: Institute for Far Eastern Studies, "North Korea Prioritizes Budget Support for the Modernization of Education in the Age of Knowledge-Based Economy," September 18, 2014; KCNA, "1st Session of 13th SPA of DPRK Held," April 9, 2014; James Pearson, "North Korean leader Kim Jong Un absent from parliament meet," *Reuters*, September 25, 2014). The following year, local elections in July, had almost full participation, as everyone over age 17 is allowed to vote, with 28,452 deputies elected. [100] Most interesting is one video interviewing two female voters and one male voter, while showing the voting in action, something that is often not seen. Hilariously that year was not the trip of a parliamentarian to Russia, but the reaction to a map by the *Washington Post*. The map, by the Electoral Integrity Project described the DPRK and Cuba "as having moderate quality elections," the same category that the US was in! In a moment of cognitive dissidence, the *Post* noted in an edit at the bottom of the article this needs to be "interpreted" and that it "does not mean that these countries are electoral or liberal democracies. The indicators measure expert perceptions of the quality of an election based on multiple criteria derived from international standards" (Pippa Norris, "The best and worst elections of 2014," *Washington Post*, February 16, 2015). The next year, 2016, there are a number of developments worth noting. In the 7th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, Kim Jong Un made a speech, apart from the formalities, said that the DPRK will continue down the line of "Byungjin," the parallel "development of nuclear weapons and national economy as long as the nuclear threat posed by imperialists continues," and declared that the county is a nuclear weapons state, but will still "strive for world denuclearization and faithfully fulfill obligations of nuclear non-proliferation" as much as humanely possible. Later that year, apart from the appearance of Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yon Yong at a session of the 13th SPA, dressed "in a black suit, while holding up her ballot," he gave a New Year's Address (Elizabeth Shim, "Kim Jong Un's sister appears at North Korea's assembly," *UPI*, June 30, 2016). The address in the nation was accompanied by a mass rally.

Now that we've established a historical context and narrative, we are able to better view the inner mechanisms of Korean democracy. With bourgeois academics ringing their hands about "totalitarianism"the bourgeois media (ex: *The Economist*, *CNN*, *HuffPost*, *New York Times*, *DW, UPI*, *Business Insider, ABC News, The Daily Beast, The Telegraph, Reuters*, *Time, AP, Newsweek, CNBC, Time,* and *Fox "News"*), white propaganda/anti-communist US-run outlets (like VOA/Voice of America and RFA/Radio Free Asia) declaring there is a "Kim dynasty" led by a "royal family" which has ruled absolutely with an "iron fist" for "three generations" (Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il, and Kim Jong Un), it is worth looking at this subject more in-depth. After all, they call the country "one of the world's most unpredictable and dangerous states," claim it has a "personality cult" (discussed in the second section of this article), and treat the country like it is soap opera or "family psychodrama." While they think the country could collapse any moment, some bourgeois media admit that "the world's spy agencies" know little about "the inner workings of the Kim family" and one U$ intelligence official said candidly back in 2011 that "we simply do not know what goes on in North Korea, and anyone who claims otherwise is relying on that fact to make false claims" (Express-News editorial, "Don't enable the Kim dynasty," Dec 19, 2011; Michael Moran, "China condones Kim dynasty," *PRI*(reprinted from *Global Post*), Dec 23, 2011; Philip Shenon, “Inside North Korea’s First Family: Rivals to Kim Jong-un’s Power,” *The Daily Beast*, Dec 19, 2011). This was coupled with the reality that “the 1994 death of…Kim Il Sung” caught Western “intelligence agencies napping,” and an editorial in a trash English paper declaring that “there’s not much the United States can do to affect events inside North Korea.” In order to show that the country has no dynasty, monarchy, dictatorship, or hereditary rule, it is important to define these words. The *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* (Fourth Edition), a bourgeois dictionary, mind you, is worth using here. This dictionary defines a dynasty as “a succession of rulers who are members of the same family,” something as hereditary when it is passed down from generation to generation or is ancestral. For the word monarchy, this dictionary says it is “rule by only one person” or “a government or state headed by a monarch; called *absolute* when there is no limit on the monarch’s power, *constitutional* when there is such a limitation.” It then defines the word monarch as “the single or sole ruler of the state” or the “hereditary ruler of the state.” As for the word dictatorship, it says that it is “absolute power or authority” or a state ruled by a dictator. The same dictionary defines a dictator as “a ruler with absolute power and authority, esp. one who exercises it tyrannically” and says the word “dictatorial” is the “unreasoned, unpredictable use of one’s authority in accord with one’s own will or desire.” The latter discussion of dictatorship will be noted more later in this section. Some may say that the titles of Supreme Leader, leader of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK), head of the military, and “eternal leader” of the country are “dominated” by the Kim family, “proving” that there is a monarchy or dynasty, with bourgeois Wikipedia even having a page on the latter, in the DPRK. However, this is false. For one, if you look at other pages, even on Wikipedia, one will see that the “Heads of State,” “Heads of Government,” “Heads of Parliament,” and “Premiers of North Korea” are not part of this family. Additionally, the State Affairs Commission, Cabinet, Central Committee of the WPK, Politburo, and SPA all have multiple members apart from the family. I’ll also talk about this later as well. Furthermore, the surname of Kim is one of the most common on the Korean Peninsula (with the other two being Lee and Park), with not everyone of this surname “necessarily related genetically,” with 20% of Koreans having Kim as their surname. For example, there are “Kim families from the Kim-hae province, Kim families from the An-dong province and Kim families from the Kyongju province,” leading some to draw up and create stereotypes for Koreans. The naming system in Korea is different than elsewhere. Kim Jong-Un’s surname (or family name) is “Kim” but his given name is “Jong-Un” unlike naming conventions in the West where the last name of a person is their surname, like Barack Obama, with his surname is Obama and given name is Barack. Some may dismiss this discussion of naming as nonsense. After all, the “hate-reader,” to take from the horrid commentary of Charlie “Chuckles” Davis of *Telesur*, may say, then why did the “leadership” of the country pass from Kim Il Sung to Kim Jong Il, then to Kim Jong-Un? Well, Jason LaBouyer, writing in a former publication, *Lodester*, put out by the Korean Friendship Association (favorable to the current government of Juche Korea but not funded or supported by it), says that when it more accurately understood by those who recognize the Korean society (Jason LaBouyer, “When friends become enemies: Understanding leftwing hostility to the DPRK, May/June 2005 [Juche 94], pp 7-9), they see:

> *“…the people’s overwhelming support not only for their nation’s leadership, but for the philosophy of [so-called] Juche socialism that has*

> *guided their economic and social development for over half a century. In other words, the Korean people's dedication is not limited to Chairman Kim Jong Il, or to the late President Kim Il Sung, but to an entire ideology."*

LaBouyer seems to say that the WPK has earned the respect of the populace, because,"unlike its many fraternal parties around the world, it has chosen not to embrace market socialism." So, basically, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il represent the Juche ideology as they embodied the ideology in their minds and actions which guided the nation, which does not make them "absolute rulers" as those crusty imperial propagandists want you to think. Instead, he writes, the WPK promotes an "economic program that retains full public ownership of the economy, putting people before profits." This challenges certain "communists" who seem to ally with capitalist poles of power, he adds:

> *"Challenging the many misperceptions and lies surrounding North Korea is seen as being too "risky" by these "communists," who seek not to change the political establishment in their capitalist homelands, but to join it…To communists such as these, socialism still means social equality and collective prosperity, values held dear by Chairman Kim Jong Il and the late Kim Il Sung and revered by the Korean people for it. Together, our global KFA family will work to ensure that Korea's people-centered socialist system remains alive and well for epochs to come"*

So, in sum, Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung are revered for their ideals and maintaining what they call a "people-centered socialist system". An article by Bjornar Simonsen, adds one further aspect: that leaders like Kim Jong Il, for instances, are "captains" of the ship and the rest of the population part of the crew (Bjornar Simonsen, "Kim Jong Il is to Korea as a captain to a ship," *Lodester* (publication of Korean Friendship Association), May/June 2005 (Juche 94), p 10):

> *Just like a ship needs a crew, so the DPRK needs the WPK. The crew is responsible for carrying out various duties given by the captain, and in such a way millions of members of the WPK work in all areas high and low, to make sure that the ship is clean, repaired and that everyone on board has everything he or she needs…Indeed, without the captain, the*

> *ship could go nowhere. And just like poetry, the guidance of Kim Jong Il is inspiring, beautiful, and eternal"*

However, this may exaggerate the role of individuals such as Kim Jong-Un, Kim Jong-Il, and Kim Il Sung. The so-called ""socialist" constitution of Juche Korea (the one in 2016), of which there is another version with a corrected Article 156 which accidentally had one line printed twice, makes this clear. In the preamble (dissected more later on) it claims that the country is "the socialist motherland of Juche" and thanks "great Comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il" for their ideas and leadership, saying that they are applied, adding that: Kim Il Sung was the founder of the country, "authored the immortal Juche idea, led the "Japanese revolutionary struggle," laying the "solid foundations for the building of an independent and sovereign State." However, it seems to distance him from the "various stages of social revolution and construction work," only saying he led these efforts, "elucidated the fundamental principles governing the building and activities of the State...and laid solid foundations for the prosperity" of the country. As for Kim Jong Il, it describes him as "a peerless patriot and defender of...Korea who...strengthened and developed" the country, playing "the dignity and power of the nation on the highest ever plane," further developing "the immortal Juche idea and Songun idea," noting that he led the country through the period after the "collapse of the world socialist system," referring to the revisionist and distorted USSR, developing the country into "a nuclear state and an unchallengeable military power." While saying that Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung are important in fighting or national reunification of Korea, clarifying the "basic ideals" of the country's foreign policy, serving as "veteran world statesmen" (supposedly developing the "socialist movement and the non-aligned movement"), were "great revolutionaries," and theoreticians who achieved much, they could not have done this without the people:

> *"Regarding "The people are my God" as their maxim, Comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il always mixed with the people, devoted their whole lives to them and turned the whole of society into a large family which is united in one mind by taking care of the people and leading them through their noble benevolent politics."*

That doesn't sound like a dynasty at all. After all, while the preamble says that the country will "uphold the great Comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il as the eternal leaders" it also says it will "carry the revolutionary cause of Juche through to completion by defending and carrying forward their ideas and achievements" which is an ideology, not a person, as part of their so-called "socialist constitution" which codifies "the Juche-oriented ideas of the great Comrades Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il on State building and their exploits in it," with the constitution named after both of them. As such, the praise of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il is meant to praise the Juche ideology and also serve as a sort of obituary of these individuals, reminding the populace of achievements while they guided the country, even through tough times. The newest constitution has new sections, due to the death of Kim Jong Il in 2011, but has some of the same ideas. Chapter 1 of the Constitution shows the democratic nature of the state. Article 1 describes the country as an "independent [so-called] socialist State representing the interests of all the Korean people" while Article 2 says that the country "is a revolutionary State which has inherited the brilliant traditions" which were formed during the "glorious revolutionary struggle against the imperialist aggressors" and as part of the ongoing struggle to liberate the homeland while pushing forward "the freedom and well-being" of the Korean people. Article 3 adds to this, saying that the Juche (self-reliance) and Songun (military-first) ideas are part of the state's outlook to the world and helping the masses:

> "*The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is guided in its activities by the Juche idea and the Songun idea, a world outlook centred on people, a revolutionary ideology for achieving the independence of the masses of the people."*

The DPRK goes further than the corrupted doctrine of "popular sovereignty" in the murderous empire, which, as Tracy Campbell in Deliver the Vote noted, which said that "rightful inhabitants of a territory" should decide "democratically" if they were to be "free" or "slave," an idea which not only set no guidelines for an election on such an issue, but did not determine who could be residents, whether they would vote on the issue directly or indirectly or if new residents could come into the area and disrupt the vote, with more possibility of electoral fraud (a phenomenon throughout US history)! Article 4 of the constitution says that the sovereignty of the country "resides in the workers, peasants, soldiers, working intellectuals and all other working people." It further adds that working people, as a result, "exercise State power through their representative organs–the Supreme People's Assembly and local People's Assemblies at all levels." In his post for WritetoRebel, Commiedad writes the following:

> *The DPRK has county, city, and provincial elections to the local people's assemblies, as well as national elections to the Supreme People's Assembly, their legislature. These are carried out every five years [actually every 4 years, but it's 5 years for the SPA]. Candidates are chosen in mass meetings held under the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland, which also organizes the political parties in the DPRK. Citizens run under these parties or they can run as independents…The fact that there is only one candidate on the ballot is because there has already been a consensus reached on who should be up for nomination for that position, by the people in their mass meetings…the masses advocate for themselves directly…The DPRK does in fact allow foreign observers of*

> *their election…The elections are effectively a fail-safe against any corruption of the democratic process that occurs during the mass meetings”*

He further adds that “societies can only be considered democratic if the masses of people manage the economy as well as the political sphere.” What CommieDad claims that the state “constitutionally, represents the interests of the working people and thus has legally excluded exploiters and oppressors from formal representation” since the “political organs of class power have become explicitly proletarian organs of class power.” However, this is only thrown into question due to the adoption of market measures and other elements. At the same time,

> *“All Koreans over the age of 17 irrespective of race, religion, sex, creed etc. are able and encouraged to participate in the organs of state power…This is in sharp contrast to the relationship between capitalist politicians and citizens. In the capitalist countries, politicians are far removed from the people and have no idea what their struggles are like. In the DPRK, the opposite is true. Because the working class is the vast majority of the population of the DPRK…the management of the state by the working class means that the state is managed by the majority of the people.”*

He even talks about the Korean prison system, saying that many of the criminals have committed “minor crimes” with the aim to “rehabilitate and reeducate,” making it “far more humane, on principle, than the system in the United States” as it is “based on a people-centered philosophy which holds that criminality is not innate to humanity. This is strong evidence that the DPRK is a state of the majority, and thus democratic.” He also says that the grief over the death of Kim Il Sung, stems “from the immense popular support he enjoyed as a leader, during and after the revolution,” not that he was a god, adding that Kim Il Sung was seen as “a highly able and dangerous guerilla leader” (even accepted by bourgeois scholars Bruce Cumings, Adrian Buzo, Michael E. Robinson, Son Oberdorfer, and Robert Carlin) by the Japanese, with the Korean guerillas receiving “little material help from the Soviets” and the Soviets taking a “fairly hands-off approach to their occupation zone, allowing a coalition of nationalist and communist resistance fighters to run their own show.” After this, a “central government was formed, based on an interim People’s Committee led by Kim Il-sung” and he was not “handpicked by the Soviets” but rather “enjoyed considerable prestige and support as a result of his years as a guerilla leader and his commitment to national liberation” with the Soviets not trusting him, with the Soviets not sure about a violent reunification of the Korean Peninsula led by Juche Korea, as even bourgeois historian David Halberstam acknowledges in The Coldest Winter (which is broadly anti-communist), with tensions between the Chinese and the Koreans, as the crossing of the 38th parallel by those from the North (in response to obvious aggression from the South) was seen as "just one more act in a long-term struggle on the part of the Korean people, part of an unfinished civil war." It is worth pointing out in early June, Kim Il-sung called for an election across the Korean Peninsula in early August, and a "consultative conference" later that month, but the three diplomats from Juche Korea were rejected by U$ puppet Syngman Rhee "outright," with Rhee expressing repeatedly his "desire to conquer the North" even to U$ diplomat John Foster Dulles! As was noted on pages 19, 38, and 40 of Kim Pyong Sik's Modern Korea: The Socialist North, Revolutionary Perspectives in the South, and Unification, in 1950 "U.S. imperialism launched its armed aggression" against Juche Korea, leading to the (Great) Fatherland Liberation War. As one site, SparkNotes, says, Rhee had "so often talked about invading North Korea that US leaders feared giving him too much in the way of weapons" with Kim Il Sung saying, reportedly, that the ROK "dared to commit armed aggression…north of the 38th parallel" saying that "ROK forces on the Ongjin Peninsula attacked North Korea in the Haeju area" which bourgeois analysts claimed was "bogus" leading to claims, for years to come, that the DPRK "invaded" the South. As one U$ Army publication admitted, "armed clashes between North and South Korea were common along the 38th Parallel" before June 25, 1950, the date of the supposed "invasion." It seems evident that the first actions of the war were fighting around Ongjin, leading some scholars (like Bruce Cumings) to say the ROK fired first. This means the actions of the DPRK would have been a response, a defensive measure. As a history of the war by Jim H. Kim notes, Kim Il Sung "sought permission to attack the South in case the North was attacked" with the war really starting "in 1945 when the U.S. suppressed the KPR government and imposed its military rule in the southern part of Korea" with killings of tens of thousands of Koreans on Cheju Island from 1948 to 1949, and major battles breaking out "between the North Korean (DPRK) and South Korean (ROK) armies along the 38th parallel line in 1949." This meant that when "the armed clash broke out in June 1950, it was more or less a continuation of the past conflicts. It was certainly not a surprise attack" as Syngman Rhee was openly "preaching a military unification of Korea by attacking the North."

After writing about how, in the aftermath of World War II, there was a "program of land reform" eight months into the occupation, that major industries, "most owned by the Japanese, were nationalized" by the victorious Korean revolutionaries in the north, he added that at the present,

> *Citizens of the DPRK support Kim Il-sung because of his courageous defiance of U.S. domination, his commitment to the reunification and the* ***real accomplishments*** *of socialism…* ***there were no mechanisms*** *by which to force the Korean people to support Kim Il-Sung during his rule…Kim Il-sung's DPRK was not a police state, but rather a democratic and socialist country waging a valiant war against imperialism. The Korean people were-and continue to be-unified in struggle and support their leaders on this basis…Bourgeois media continues to portray the DPRK as*

> *a totalitarian nightmare, populated exclusively by a pacified and frightened citizenry…The north Korean people have a far greater say in how their lives are structured than do citizens of even the most "democratic" capitalist countries. They are not forced to adhere to a Party Line handed down from on high, but* ***rather are encouraged to participate*** *in the running of society…."*

His words are proven for one, by Article 6, of the constitution, saying that organs of" State power at all levels, from the county People's Assembly to the Supreme People's Assembly," are elected on the "principle of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot." It is also buttressed by Article 7, saying that deputies of state power at all levels have "close ties with their constituents and are accountable to them for their work." This accountability means that "electors may recall at any time the deputies they have elected if the latter lose the trust of the former." This means that voters are able to recall a deputy, a power which isn't even held in many (only some) municipal settings across the US! There are additional aspects. Article 5 says that all state organs in the country "are formed and function on the principle of democratic centralism." This is an originally Marxist principle, showing the still-standing influence of Marxism-Leninism in the country incorporated in the ideology of Juche, which was first applied by the Bolsheviks, although some question with certainty how much Juche is tied to Marxism as an ideology. This principle balances democracy and centralism, as even acknowledged by Trotsky who detested the idea, with members taking part in "policy discussions and elections at all levels," with those at all levels responsible to the populace and subject to their supervision, with a focus on unity. It was an idea explained by Lenin, who wrote to St. Petersburg Workers, in 1906, about this very principle:

> *"There remains an important, serious and extremely responsible task:* ***really to apply the principles of democratic centralism in Party organisation, to work tirelessly to make the local organisations the principal organisational units of the Party in fact, and not merely in name, and to see to it that all the higher-standing bodies are elected, accountable, and subject to recall****. We must work hard to build up an organisation that will include all the class-conscious Social-Democratic workers, and will live its own independent political life. The* ***autonomy*** *of every Party organisation, which hitherto has been largely a dead letter, must become a reality. The fight for posts, fear of the other "faction", must be eliminated.* ***Let us have really united*** *Party organisations, in which*

> *there will only be a purely ideological struggle between different trends of Social-Democratic thought. It will not be easy to achieve this; nor shall we achieve it at one stroke. But the road has been mapped out, the principles have been proclaimed, and* ***we must now work for the complete and consistent putting into effect*** *of this organisational ideal…If we have really and seriously decided to introduce democratic centralism in our Party, and if we have resolved to draw the masses of the workers into intelligent decision of Party questions,* ***we must have these questions discussed in the press, at meetings, in circles and at group meetings****. But in the united Party this ideological struggle must not split the organisations, must not hinder the* ***unity of action*** *of the proletariat. This is a new principle as yet in our Party life, and considerable effort will be needed to implement it properly."*

This was echoed in 1921, when he wrote to the 10th Party Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia that unity and cohesion of those in the ranks of the party, coupled with full trust among member of the party and work that "embodies the unity of will of the proletarian vanguard" are necessary because there are intensified waverings "of the petty bourgeois population in the country." He added that it is important that "all class-conscious workers" realize the harmful nature of factionalism, the "appearance of groups with platforms of their own and with a will to close ranks to a certain extent and create their own group discipline," since it leads to "less friendly work and to repeated and intensified attempts by enemies of the ruling party...to deepen the divisions and use them for purposes of counter-revolution." He also said that this is important because the "enemies of the proletariat take advantage of all deviations from a strictly consistent communist line," adding that "achieving unity of will of the proletarian vanguard as a basic condition for the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat," noting that verification of party decisions and efforts to correct "mistakes" should not be "submitted for discussion by groups formed on the basis of some 'platform' or other," but rather " be submitted for discussion by all party members." It is with this that Lenin adds:

> "*Every person who voices criticism must be mindful of the party's situation, in the midst of enemy encirclement, and must also, through direct participation in Soviet and party work, strive in practice to correct the party's mistakes…the party will continue tirelessly – constantly testing new methods – to use every means to combat bureaucratism, to expand*

> *democratism and initiative, and to seek out, expose, and expel those who have adhered to the party under false pretenses…in order to ensure strict discipline within the party and in all Soviet work, and to achieve maximum unity while eliminating all factionalism, the Congress gives the Central Committee full powers to apply all measures of party punishment up to and including expulsion."*

This connects with the support for further party discipline as outlined by Kim Jong-Un in his New Years' speech. Coming back to the constitution of the DPRK, you could say that Commie Dad was right when he said there is "management of the state by the working class" although others have questioned this as the reality. Article 8 declares that the country's social system will be "people-centered" to such an extent that "working people are the masters of everything and everything in society serves them" while the state shall "defend the interests of the workers, peasants, soldiers, working intellectuals and all other working people who have been freed from exploitation and oppression." This would, allow, as the article delineates, workers to "become the masters of the State and society, and respect and protect human rights." Article 9 expands on this. It claims that the DPRK will "strive to achieve the complete victory of socialism in the northern half of Korea by strengthening the people's power" while the country works to perform "ideological, technological and cultural" revolutions, pushing for reunification of the Korean Peninsula "on the principle of independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity." This is reinforced by Article 10, saying that the country is underpinned by the unity of the population "based on the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class," adding that the state will work to "revolutionize all the members of society, and assimilate them to the working class by intensifying the ideological revolution," and as such, turn the whole of society into a collective which is "united in a comradely way." This would not be possible without the "leadership of the Workers' Party of Korea" as stated in Article 11, saying that the country shall conduct its activities under such leadership.

In order to have a state that serves the workers, Article 12 says that the state will adhere to "the class line" while strengthening the "dictatorship of the people's democracy," working to defend "the people's power and [so-called] socialist system against all subversive acts of hostile elements at home and abroad." This "dictatorship of the people's democracy" is just another way of asserting the long-held Marxist principle of a dictatorship of the proletariat (DoTP as some abbreviate it) or proletarian democracy, although some question whether this is completely the reality. This principle, asserts that working class would decide "amongst themselves, by consensus what and how it should be done" with all positions of authority elected "solely by workers and subject to recall at any time" with Lenin adding that DoTP is not only "a forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., of an insignificant minority the population, the landlords and capitalists" but is a change "in the democratic forms and institutions" and an "unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism...[a] decisive, participation in the democratic administration of the state" which brings "the working people close to the machinery of government." He also says that DoTP requires that "mass organizations of the working people" be in "constant and unfailing participation in the administration of the state."

This brings me to article 13. It says that the state itself shall implement the "mass line and apply the Chongsanri spirit and Chongsanri method to all its activities" meaning that, in their summary, "superiors assist their subordinates, mix with the masses to find solutions to problems and rouse them to conscious enthusiasm by giving precedence to political work, work with people." The spirit and method of Chongsanri is undoubtedly embodied in the Chongsan-ri Cooperative Farm, as it is known as "the ideal model of DPRK farming technique," being equipped with facilities like a "school and housing for all farmers." Of course, this farm is shown to many visitors, with some, even with Orientalist views (also see here), saying that it does represent a typical farm in the country, with a surface-to-air unit nearby (why not? The country is still officially at war with the U$). This then leads to the idea of the "mass line." This derives from Mao Tse Tung, sometimes called Mao Zedong in the West, showing that Juche has Maoist elements in it, just as much as it has straight Marxist, or even Leninist, ones, even though others say it is removed from Marxism altogether! He talks about this term directly, when he spoke to the *Shansi-Suiyuan Daily* editorial staff on April 2, 1948:

> *"For over twenty years our Party has carried on mass work every day, and for the past dozen years it has* ***talked about the mass line every day****. We have always maintained that the revolution must rely on the masses of the people, on everybody's taking a hand, and have opposed relying merely on a few persons issuing orders.* ***The mass line, however, is still not being thoroughly carried out in the work of some comrades; they still rely solely on a handful of people working in solitude****. One reason is that, whatever they do, they are always reluctant to explain it to the people they lead and that they do not understand why or how to give play to the initiative and creative energy of those they lead. Subjectively, they too want everyone to take a hand in the work, but they do not let other people know what is to be done or how to do it. That being the case, how can everyone be expected to get moving and how can anything be done well?* ***To solve this problem the basic thing is, of course, to carry out ideological education on the mass line, but at the same time we must teach these comrades many concrete methods of work****."*

From this, he seems to be saying that the "mass line" means that a revolution must rely on the masses of people, with the idea of ideological education of those in the masses, teaching them "concrete methods of work" tied into this conception. This links with his other quotes about the power of the people, in a page from the book, "Quotations from Mao Tse Tung," commonly called the "Little Red Book" in the West. He argued that the masses should be listened to, that their problems should be "placed on our agenda" (January 1934), that the "masses are the real heroes" (Spring 1941), and advocating for taking the ideas of the "the masses and concentrate them," then go back to the masses, persevering in these ideas, working to "carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership" (June 1943). He added that leading cadres should be constantly aware of "production by the masses, the interests of the masses, [and] the experiences and feelings of the masses" (November 1943), adding that there must be the "right task, policy and style of work" in order to conform with demands of the masses, strengthening "our ties with the masses," but that the "wrong task, policy and style of work...[will] invariably alienate us from the masses" (April 1945). This leads to his further observation that no comrade should be "divorced from the masses" but should rather, "love the people and listen attentively to the voice of the masses" (April 1945), further observing that there would be adventurism if "we tried to go on the offensive when the masses are not yet awakened" (April 1948) and adds that in all mass movements there should be "a basic investigation and analysis of the number of active supporters, opponents and neutrals" (March 1949). Beyond this, he added that the masses have boundless creative power" (1955) and have "a potentially inexhaustible enthusiasm for socialism" (1955) which can be brought together by leaders, whom can unite the "small number of active elements" within the masses, consisting of three parts: "the relatively active, the intermediate and the relatively backward." (June 1943) Most profound was his statement that "the people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history" (April 1945), which the Koreans believe without a doubt, expressing that the people are "god" meaning that they are to be followed moving forward in the country's social construction.

Coming back to the DPRK constitution, it is worth focusing on Articles 14 and 18. The first of these articles says that the state will "conduct the Three-Revolution Red Flag Movement" along with other "mass movements so as to accelerate the building of socialism to the maximum. The Three-Revolution Red Flag Movement was originally proposed in 1973 as the Three Revolutions Team Movement, launched in late 1974, and further intensified in December 1975, with "large numbers of young people were sent to the countryside and to factories to boost production and introduce new methods and technologies" while bourgeois analysts claimed it was not successful and claim it has "lost any real importance" in recent years. In November 1986, Kim Jong-Il talked about this very movement in a speech (mirrored by the Internet Archive and elsewhere online),speaking to a national meeting of the Three-Revolution Red Flag Movement's Vanguard, talking about the movement's accomplishments. Then we get to Article 18. This says that the law of the country "reflects the wishes and interests of the working people and is a basic instrument for State administration." It further says that respect, adherence, and execution of the law "is the duty of all institutions, enterprises, organizations and citizens." In order to remove any errors or defects, one could say, the state dedicates itself, to perfecting "the system of [so-called] socialist law and promote the [so-called] socialist law-abiding life." Articles 15, 16, and 17 are also relevant. Article 15 says the country will "champion the democratic national rights of Koreans overseas and their rights recognized by international law as well as their interests" showing the solidarity with those outside the country. This is similar to Article 16, which says that the country will “guarantee the legal rights and interests of foreigners in its territory.” This is important if there is to be future investment in the country by various capitalist interests, but also to show that the country is not just about Koreans. Most importantly is Article 17, declaring that “independence, peace and friendship” are basic ideals of the country, noting that “political, economic and cultural relations” will be established “with all friendly countries, on the principles of complete equality, independence, mutual respect, non-interference” in the affairs of others and “mutual benefit.” Furthermore, the State claims it will engage in proletarian internationalism by promoting "unity with people all over the world who defend their independence, and resolutely support and encourage the struggles of all people who oppose all forms of aggression and interference and fight for their countries’ independence and national and class emancipation." A manifestation of unity with people around the world are “friendship societies,” which stand in solidarity with the DPRK, and those studying the Juche idea who have also organized themselves into societies.

It is worth pointing out the differences, in Chapter 1 alone, between the 1998 Kim Il Sung Constitution and 2016 “Nuclear” Constitution (which I call the “*Constitution of DPRK post-2011" in the PDF* to not be confused with the 2012 constitution), which is officially called the “Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il Constitution.” Most of the changes are minor, like changing “DPRK” to Democratic People’s Republic of Korea or “SPA” to Supreme People’s Assembly, but others are worth noting:

- The “Songun idea” (a military-first ideology) has been added as part of the guiding ideology of the state (Article 3)
- The word “soldiers” has been added to those with which the sovereignty of the state resides showing the importance of the defense of the state from outside sources, to say the least (Article 4)
- Soldiers are now included as among the working people, and the phrasing that such people are “freed from exploitation and oppression and become the masters of the State and society, and respect and protect human rights” has been added, the latter part to counter those horrid “human rights reports” by the U$ (Article 8)
- Within the worker-peasant alliance in the country, such an alliance is led “by the working class.” rather than the working class only having a “leading role” (Article 10)
- The “interests” of Koreans overseas is recognized as something the government will champion and advocate for (Article 15)
- The state is still promoting unity with people across the world, but those who “defend their independence will get resolute support from the country, and the struggles of those who “oppose all forms of aggression and interference and fight[ing] for their countries’ independence and national and class emancipation” will be encouraged (Article 17)

Many allege that the firm establishment of ‘Songun’ politics; a policy the Workers Party of Korea describes as “giving precedence to arms and the military” nullifies the aforementioned democratic gains. I would like to assert that this is not the case. Despite Western insistence on the novelty of Songun politics, the official history of the DPRK points to the development of Songun decades before the DPRK was even formed. This is important to note because it highlights how an anti-imperialist and essentially national liberation struggle has tempered the politics of socialist Korea from the very beginning. Regardless, the collapse of the Soviet Union did bring qualitative changes to the political structure of the DPRK. Notably, the National Defense Commission has become the "backbone organ in the state administrative organ" and "commands all the work of the politics, military and economy". This can largely be attributed to the unique position the DPRK assumed following its de facto isolation internationally in the mid 1990′s. The fall of the Soviet Union meant deep economic austerity, moreover, it meant an emboldened US and comprador south. This meant the DPRK was forced to pursue a deeply militaristic road of development (hence, the superiority of the National Defense Commission and wide dissemination of Songun politics). Ultimately what we see emerge from this 1990′s transformation is a unique worker's state conditioned by the intense contradictions between its socialist construction and the ever present threat of imperialist intervention. Unique not only in its precarious historical predicament but also in the related development of its internal contradictions which no doubt assume an intensely dialectical relationship with parallel external contradictions. This proves that the DPRK is not somewhere that is static, with the 2012 Constitution removing the few references to "communism" that were in the 1998 Constitution (in Articles 29, 40), which was reaffirmed in the 2016 Constitution. All references to socialism and concepts which are part of Juche, were retained, but the changes are worrisome to say the least.

In Chapter II of the Constitution, titled "The Economy," there have been few changes in the overall organization of the economy, which relies on "socialist production relations," a foundation of an "independent national economy" (Article 20) and has the means of production "owned by the State and social, cooperative organizations" (Article 21). Furthermore, as Article 21 outlines, the State's property belongs to the populace, and there is, hence, "no limit to the property which the State can own" with the state protecting and developing State property, which "plays the leading role in the economic development of the country," meaning that the state controls the commanding heights of the economy. Additionally, the property of social cooperative organizations is protected by the state, with such organizations allowed to own land, farm machinery, ships, and "small and medium-sized factories and enterprises" (Article 22). This is connected with working to enhance the "ideological consciousness" of the peasantry, allow people's property to be part of cooperative organizations, on an organic basis rather than a systematic one (as it was in the previous version of the constitution), and efforts to improving the management and guidance of so-called "socialist cooperative economic system." (Article 23). This is connected with the ultimate goal of transforming the property of such organizations "into the property of the people as a whole" on a basis of "voluntary will of all their members" which means it would be done on a democratic basis. Additionally, the DPRK regards, in Article 25, improvement of "material and cultural standards" of the populace of supreme importance, with the increasing material wealth of the society, in which "taxes have been abolished," is used entirely to promote the people's well-being with the state providing all working people with "every condition for obtaining food, clothing and housing," a progressive statement without question.

The state, constitutionally, represents the interests of the working people and thus has legally excluded exploiters and oppressors from formal representation:

> "The social system of the DPRK is a people-centered system under which the working peoples are masters of everything, and everything in society serves the working peoples. The State shall defend and protect the interests of the workers, peasants, and working intellectuals who have been freed from exploitation and oppression and become masters of the State and society"

Therefore the political organs of class power have become explicitly proletarian organs of class power; at least in the sense that is provided constitutionally to the Korean people. The guiding political force in the DPRK remains the Workers Party of Korea (WPK) which holds 601/687 seats in the Supreme People's Assembly and the de facto leading party in the ruling coalition Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland. All Koreans over the age of 17 irrespective of race, religion, sex, creed etc. are able and encouraged to participate in the organs of state power. Elections are routinely held for local and central organs of state power being usually People's Assemblies which comprise the core of state power in the DPRK; from which come the 'standing' organs of class power being institutionally the National Defence Commission and the Korean People's Army (KPA) (Korea-DPR. 2013). The road of Songun has meant material developments in the social realities which comprise what the West considers North Korea. The large emphasis on military advancement and might has only assisted the imperialist detractors in their description of the DPRK as a 'military dictatorship.' This is at best a surface-level analysis. It is considered the highest honor for a Korean to serve their Fatherland in the struggle against imperialism by joining the Korean People's Army. Unlike other standing military forces, the KPA is definitively involved in the social as well as material construction of socialism in North Korea. Understanding this helps us understand how the unique internal developments of socialist Korea created an equally unique expression of class power. The people are also closely connected to the leaders of the DPRK, the Party cadres.The Party cadres are an inescapable feature of the North Korean political apparatus and are therefore possibly the closest link the Korean people have to their formal organs of power. Cadres as well as Party officials and administrators are known to visit workplaces and provide motivation as well as guidance to the working people (Journal of Asian and African Studies. 2013. *Elite Volatility and Change in North Korean Politics: 1970-2010)*. This is in sharp contrast to the relationship between capitalist politicians and citizens. In the capitalist countries, politicians are far removed from the people and have no idea what their struggles are like. In the DPRK, the opposite is true. Because the working class is the vast majority of the population of the DPRK (roughly seventy percent), the management of the state by the working class means that the state is managed by the majority of the people.

Then we get to the 27th article of the constitution. This says that a technological revolution is important to develop the socialist economy, with the state conducting all economic activities by giving primary preference to "technical development" while pushing ahead with "scientific and technological development" and technical renovation of the economy, promoting mass technical innovation so the working people can be freed from "difficult, tiresome labour" and to narrow the "distinctions between physical and mental labour," which is also important. Such a support of the power of the proletariat is reinforced by Article 28 saying the state will industrialize and modernize agriculture through a "rural technical revolution" which improves the role of the country, with assistance and guidance to rural areas so that the "difference between town and countryside" and the class distinction "between workers and peasants" can be eliminated. It is this sentiment that Marx and Engels talked about in the Communist Manifesto, as they specifically advocates for the gradual abolition of "distinction between town and country by a more equable distribution of the populace." This article also says that the state will build production facilities for cooperative farms "and modern farms in the countryside." At the same time, the state renders labor of the working people "more joyful and worthwhile" so that people work with enthusiasm and express their creativity (Article 29). There are many other aspects of the State which favor the working class: an eight-hour working day, with the length of this day reduced for arduous or special types off work (Article 30), with working hours fully utilized through "proper organization of labor and enforcement of labor discipline"; prohibiting child labor with the minimum working age being 16 years (Article 31); having the State using its guidance wisely to help manage the so-called "socialist economy" (Article 32); and having the Taean work system. The latter is claimed to be a "socialist form of economic management" where the economy is operated on a scientific and rational basis on the basis of the efforts of those of the masses who are producers, connected with agricultural management conducted by "industrial methods" as a way for the state to direct and manage the economy, along with enforcing a self-accounting system in such economic management to meet the requirements of such a work system while making "proper use of such economic levers as cost, price and profit" (Article 33), the latter which is part of the country's revisionism. Still, there are other aspects which benefit the proletariat, and form the democratic basis of the country. For one, the country has a planned economy (Article 34) while the state will work to increase its "material accumulation and expand and develop [so-called] socialist property" by having increased production and exercising "strict financial control in all spheres" (Article 35), and the state pursuing a "tariff policy" in order to protect the country's "independent national economy" (Article 38) which is understandable. There have been some important changes, some for the better, others which are worrisome as they lead to further contradictions, you can say:

- Private property was the "property meeting the simple and individual aims of the citizen" but is now "property owned and consumed by individual citizens." (Article 24). This property is derived from so-called socialist distribution and from benefits from the state. While the income from "individual sideline activities" and from "legal economic activities" will be "private property," kitchen gardens are not just limited to cooperative farmers anymore. The State still will protect such property, and the right to inherit it as well despite the fact that Marx and Engels specifically advocated against the right of inheritance in the Communist Manifesto and elsewhere.
- Saying that the state is building a "socialist, independent national economy" instead of one that is just one that is "independent nationalist" (Article 26).
- A new section was added in Article 34: "The State shall ensure a high rate of growth in production and a balanced development of the national economy by implementing unified and detailed planning."

- Enterprises, run by those from Juche Korea, are now allowed to be part of the country's foreign trade (Article 36)
- Minor changes, like "DPRK" to "country" but important changes from "contractual joint venture" to "contractual joint ventures," "corporations" to "foreign corporations" and "special economic zone" to "special economic zones" which seem to be open to domestic enterprises, with the previous version seeming to make it seem like this would not be the case (Article 37). This means that there can be more than just one zone, heightening the country's contradictions, even more than Article 36, without a doubt. All of these changes are worrisome to say the least.

Apart from promoting so-called socialist culture as something that "contributes to improving the creative ability of working people" (Article 39), this chapter says that the country will carry out a "cultural revolution" (originally a Maoist idea) with an effort to train everyone in the populace to be "builders of [so-called] socialism," equipping them with a "profound knowledge of nature and society and a high level of culture and technology," which would make the whole society "intellectual" (Article 40). It also says that such a so-called socialist culture will be "people-oriented" and revolutionary, serving the working classes with the state opposing "the cultural infiltration of imperialism and any tendency to return to the past" with a protection of national cultural heritage, and developing such a culture "in keeping with the existing [so-called] socialist situation" (Article 41). Again, this shows the fact that the society can be fluid and changing, not something that is static and dull as the Orientalist bourgeois media likes to paint it. Promotion of culture is connected with the State working toward establishing a "new [so-called] socialist way of life in every sphere" while eliminating the way of "life inherited from the outmoded society" (Article 42) referring to the society under brutal Japanese occupation (1910-1945) undoubtedly. This chapter also says that the State shall embody the principles of "[so-called] socialist pedagogy" (teaching) in order to raise the new generation to be not only "steadfast revolutionaries who will fight for society and the people," but to be those of the "Juche type" (in the 1998 Constitution it was "communist type") who are "knowledgeable, morally sound and physically healthy" (Article 43). This is interconnected with the State's efforts to:

- give "precedence to public education and the training of cadres" for the nation as a whole, closely combining "general education with technological education, and education with productive labor" (Article 44)
- develop a "universal compulsory twelve-year education" program in accordance with modern science, technology, and "practical requirements of [so-called] socialist construction" (Article 45)
- train "competent technicians and experts," through the enhancement of the regular educational system, different forms of "studying while working" and improvement of the scientific and theoretical "levels of technological education" and education in basic and social sciences (Article 46).

There are further aspects showing the democratic nature of the state. Not only is education to "all pupils and students" provided by the State "free of charge, and "grant allowances to students at universities and colleges" (Article 47), but the State works to strengthen social education with the provision of "all conditions for study" to the working people (Article 48). One major example of this in action is the Grand People's Study House in Pyongyang, which opened in April 1982, after it was constructed over a period of 21 months, available to all the citizens. This is connected to Article 49 which says that the State will pay for all children in creches (hospitals) and kindergartens while Article 50 says that Juche shall be established in scientific research. This will be accomplished, says the article, with the introduction of "advanced science and technology in every possible way" with the opening up of "new areas of science and technology" while raising the country's "science and technology to the world level." The latter article is connected with Article 51, which says that the state shall put forward a plan to "develop science and technology," implemented through "strict discipline" while strengthening "creative cooperation among scientists, technicians and producers." This is important for any society. This cooperation is manifested in Article 52 saying that "Juche-oriented, revolutionary art and literature," which is supposedly socialist in content and national in form, will be developed by the State through the encouragement of "creative workers and artists to produce workers of high ideological and artistic value" (like Mansudae Art Studio). This is coupled with enlisting "broad sections of the masses in literary and artistic activities" and the provision, by the State as outlined in Article 53, of "sufficient modern cultural facilities" which meet the demands of people who want to improve themselves physically and mentally, so the working class can "enjoy a full [supposedly] socialist cultured, aesthetic life." There are other efforts of the State to defend and develop the country's culture: safeguarding the Korean language and developing it to meet "present-day needs" (Article 54) and preparing people for work and national defense through the popularization of sport and physical culture, making it part of their "daily regime" (or their daily lives) with the augmenting of sporting skills to meet the reality of the country and trend in "modern sporting skills" (Article 55). It took until 2019 for National defense to be no longer emphasized on the role of the State Affairs Commission. The defense of the Party Central Committee headed by Kim Jong-un was included in the mission of the Korean People's Army and its reserve organizations.

The State is also obligated to improve the health of working people through developing and consolidating the "system of universal free medical service" and improving the system of preventive medicine and "district doctor system" (Article 56). Finally, the State is also obligated to protect and promote the environment, preferring it over production, preventing environmental pollution, and working to provide the populace "with a hygienic living environment and working conditions," meaning it has a pro-ecology stand (Article 57).

Chapter IV of the DPRK's constitution focuses on National Defense - article 58 says that the country is "shored up by the all-people, nationwide defence system," while Article 60 says that the state will implement the line of "self-reliance defense" with the training of the army to be an army of cadres, modernizing the armed forces, arming of all the country's people, fortifying the country, and equipping the "army and the people politically and ideologically," which are basically the same in 1998 and 2016. However, the other articles have changed:

- For Article 59, DPRK is now Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Before the mission was to "safeguard the interests of the working people, to defend the [so-called] socialist system and the gains of the revolution from aggression" but now the mission is to "defend the leadership of the revolution, to safeguard the interests of the working people, to defend the [so-called] socialist system and the gains of the revolution" while implementing the "Songun-based revolutionary line."

- For Article 61, the 1998 version said that military and mass discipline in the armed forces will be strengthened, with the promotion of unity between offices and men, and the army and the people. The 2016 version talks about a "revolutionary command system and military climate" but the text remains the same otherwise.

The next section worth focusing on is Chapter V, titled "Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens"). Between the 1998 version and the 2016 version (the most recent), there have been few changes in this chapter. As such, in both versions, citizens, whose claim to citizenship is defined by a "law of nationality" and is under protection "regardless of domicile" (Article 62), have their rights and duties based on the collectivist principle of "one for all and all for one" (Article 63) with the state guaranteeing "genuine democratic rights and freedoms," the citizens' material and cultural well-being. Furthermore, their he "rights and freedoms of citizens" are amplified with the development and consolidation "of the [so-called] socialist system" (Article 64). With this, citizens are able to:

- "enjoy equal rights in all spheres of State and public activity" (Article 65)

- "elect and be elected" once they have reached the "age of 17," with this right available regardless of "sex, race, occupation, length of residence, property status, education, party affiliation, political views or religious belief" (Article 66). This also applies to citizens who serve in the armed forces. Someone can only be disenfranchised by a "Court decision" or if they are "legally certified insane," meaning that they do not have the right to "elect or be elected." This broad description of universal suffrage is an undeniable expression of democracy, with those who are disabled helped a great deal in Juche Korea, as I've seen in various news reports.

- exercise their freedom of speech, press, assembly, demonstration and association, with the State guaranteeing conditions for the "free activities of democratic political parties and social organizations" (Article 67). As will be explained later, this is not conceived the same as bourgeois "free expression."

- exercise their “freedom of religious belief,” a right which includes the ability to construct religious buildings and hold religious ceremonies, but cannot be used as a reason to draw in “foreign forces,” harm the social order or the State (Article 68). Revisionist Roland Boer, writes about this, noting that Kim Il Sung’s personal background was “the Reformed tradition [of Christianity] embodied in “Presbyterianism” with Kim highlighting “progressive Christians” who advocated for Korean independence in his memoirs while he had a “continuing interest in religion and religious history” and that in 1981, a Reverend, Kim Song Rak, who visited Juche Korea, with Kim saying he should “pray before his meal” which surprised the reverend, as he had “not expected a communist leader to be concerned about prayer.” Boer adds that “the state constructs churches for believers and provides them with accommodation” with a religious department within Kim Il Sung University, “affinity between some Christians in the south and communism,” and a decline of belief due to the destruction of all structures in the North during the Fatherland Liberation War, with a focus on “rebuilding the country” after the war, rather than rebuilding religious structures which had been destroyed. In another post on the subject, he writes that “local Chondoism (Ch’ŏndogyo) – or ‘Religion of the Heavenly Way’ – is recognised and favoured by the government” because it is “a very Korean form of revolutionary religion,” melds many different religious influences (“Daoist, Confucian, Buddhist, Roman Catholic influences) with those of a local variety, and more specifically was part of the anti-Japanese colonial struggle, with its connection with revolutionary struggle (then the Tonghak Revolution), a “precursor to the communist movement.” With all of this, Chondoism stayed a “northern Korean movement” primarily, with “almost 3 million adherents in the north and about 800 places of worship” with Chondoism “bequeathed to Korean culture a number of principles, with an explicit drive to social and religious equality,” which connects to ” Kim’s articulation of communism in terms of their common source,” with his argument that “the people are God-heaven.” Kim also says that “Marx’s most well-known statement that religion is the opium of the people” is meant to warn against temptation of religious mirage, not opposing believers in general, saying that communists should welcome, join hands with patriotic religionists, saying that Marx’s idea is not “a universal formula that should be applied everywhere, but rather a guide for action that should be sensitive to the specific conditions and traditions of a situation.” However, these actions by the DPRK are a bit worrisome.

- exercise their right to submit petitions and complaints, which the state is obligated to “investigate and deal with” in an impartial manner “as stipulated by law (Article 69). This is changed from the 1998 version, with the words “Complaints and petitions shall be...dealt with...within the period fixed by law” changed to “The State shall investigate and deal with complaints and petitions impartially as stipulated by law.”

- exercise their "right to work," which is totally different than the anti-union "right to work" proposed in the U$, which means that all citizens who are able-bodied can choose occupations which are in "accordance with their wishes and skills," and are, as a result, "provided with stable jobs and working conditions" (Article 70). Furthermore, citizens work according to their abilities and are paid "in accordance with the quantity and quality of their work," reportedly.

exercise the "right of relaxation" which is ensured by established working hours, provision of holidays, "paid leave, accommodation at health resorts and holiday homes" which are available "at State expense" and the "growing network of cultural facilities" (Article 71)

- exercise the right to "free medical care" with all persons who cannot work anymore because of "old age, illness or physical disability along with "seniors and minors" who have no means to support themselves are "entitled to material assistance" (Article 72). This right of free medical care is ensured through an "expanding network of hospitals, sanatoria…medical institutions, State social insurance and other social security systems."

- exercise the "right to education" which is enshrined by an "advanced educational system" and by "educational measures enacted by the State for the benefit of the people" (Article 73)

- engage in "scientific, literary and artistic pursuits" with the State granting benefits to "inventors and innovators" with the law of the country protecting "copyrights, inventions and patents" (Article 74). The newer Constitution added the word "inventions" as something the country would protect.

- exercise their "freedom of residence and travel" (Article 75), an important right for a democratic society, further proving that no one is "keeping" those in the DPRK there against their will. People can leave and return as they please.

There's more. The State also guarantees the "inviolability of the person…the home, and privacy of correspondence" with citizens not placed under "control or arrest" or a person's home not searched "without a legal warrant" (Article 79). Furthermore, revolutionary fighters, families of patriotic or revolutionary martyrs, families of soldiers who are "disabled on duty" and those who are in the People's Army, enjoy "special protection of State and Society" (Article 76). Additionally, the right of asylum is provided to foreign nationals who are "persecuted for struggling for peace and democracy, national independence and socialism or for the freedom of scientific and cultural pursuits" (Article 80), showing the country stands for international solidarity. The DPRK also grants rights to women, showing that it believes the liberation of women is part of the Korean revolution, which some could call "feminist" or at least "female empowerment." This is through the declaration that women and men have equal rights and equal social status, with the state affording "special protection to mothers and children" with maternity leave, reduced working hours for those with several children, a "wide network of maternity hospitals...kindergartens" and other measures (Article 77). Anything that isn't included there is encapsulated in the State being obligated to provide "all conditions for women to play their full roles in society," like Kim Yo Jong, Kim Jong Un's younger sister, who is a "serious politician in her own right." This, is undeniably important. It is connected to Article 78 saying that "marriage and the family shall be protected by the State. The State pays great attention to consolidating the family, the basic unit of social life." Whatever one might think, this doesn't run afoul of Marx's criticism of the bourgeois family, as such marriages and families are important for keeping the society together, especially when it is under imperialist assault. As has been noted earlier, universal suffrage and the ability to be elected (noted in Article 66), is provided to all above the age of 17, including those "in the armed forces," except for those disenfranchised by a court, or those "legally certified insane."This means that citizens of the DPRK can be elected to the Supreme People's Assembly, the "highest organ of State power in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" and the "People's Assembly of a province (or municipality directly under central authority), city (or district) or county," which is "the local organ of State power," central to the governmental system and democracy within the country as a whole. In exchange for these broad fundamental rights, citizens have a number of duties, showing that the "free expression" cannot support capitalist aims to destroy the so-called socialist system. For one, citizens are bound to safeguard "political and ideological unity and solidarity of the people" while cherishing their "organization and collective" by working in devoted manner "for the good of society and the people" (Article 81). Citizens are further required, as they would in any society, to strictly follow the state's laws and so-called socialist standards in life, while defending their "honour and dignity" as citizens of the country (Article 82). Most importantly, citizens, whom have the noble duty and honor of work, shall "willingly and conscientiously participate in work and strictly observe labour discipline and working hours" (Article 83). The latter allows for effective social construction, and will work to take care of the property (which is "inviolable") of social, cooperative organizations and the State with the combating of all "forms of misappropriation and waste" as they work to "manage the nation's economy diligently as the masters" (Article 84). Finally, Article 85 says that citizens should "constantly increase their revolutionary vigilance" with fighting for the "security of the State" while Article 86 says that citizens shall "defend the country," as national defense is the honor and "supreme duty" of citizens," serving in the armed forces as "required by law."

We then get to Chapter VI which is titled "State Organs" which has 8 sub-sections, which will show, once and for all, how the state is not a dynasty, monarchy, dictatorship, or has hereditary rule but is rather one that is democratic without question. The first subsection (section 1) focuses on the Supreme People's Assembly, which is called SPA for the rest of this article. For one, the legislature is the "highest organ of state power" in the country (Article

87), not the “Kim family” as Orientalist bourgeois media and their allies would make you believe. Additionally, the SPA, which exercises “legislative power” (Article 88), has a Presidium who may “exercise legislative power” when the SPA is not in session and whom convenes the regular sessions once or twice a year, with extraordinary sessions held at their request or if one-third of the deputies request such a session (Article 92). In another element of democracy, the SPA requires a “quorum of at least two thirds”of the deputies in order to meet (Article 93) with the deputies elected “on the principle of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot” (Article 89). This connects to Article 66, as noted earlier, that all citizens over the age of 17, regardless of “sex, race, occupation, length of residence, property status, education, party affiliation, political views…religious belief,” or if they are in the armed forces, can elect individuals or be elected, with disenfranchisement only occurring due to a Court decision or if someone is “legally certified insane.” Deputies, unlike those in the U$ House of Representatives who serve for two years and in the U$ Senate for six years, are elected for a “term of five years” with a new session the SPA elected according to the SPA Presidium’s decision, with the possible prolonging of the term of office of a SPA session if “unavoidable circumstances render an election impossible” (Article 90) like the gap between the SPA election in September 1948 and August 1957 because “the DPRK was in no shape to have an election in the middle of defending itself from imperialist attack” (referring to the Fatherland Liberation War), or between the 1990 election and July 1998, due to the death of Kim Il Sung in 1994, with the next elections in the country already scheduled. Earlier, we noted that the SPA is “the highest national representative organ of the entire people” and that the ” election of a new SPA is held by a decision of the Standing Committee of the SPA prior to expiry of the term of office of the current SPA” with the Standing Committee helping “organize the next (or current) election of the SPA.” As the highest organ of state power in the DPRK, the SPA elects its Speaker and Deputy Speaker, with the speaker presiding over the legislative sessions each year (Article 94), with the SPA, in its first session, electing a Credentials Committee, and after hearing its report, adopts “a decision confirming the credentials of deputies” (Article 96), with various committees (as noted earlier) appointed by the legislature, including the vice-chair and chair of these committees, with these committees assisting the SPA in its work, while planning or deliberating “the State policy and bills,” taking measures for “their implementation,” with the committees working under the guidance of the SPA Presidium during “intervals between sessions” of the SPA (Article 98). In order to promote decorum, deputies to the SPA are “guaranteed inviolability,” meaning that no deputy may be “arrested or punished” without the legislature’s consent, or, when it is not in session with the “consent of the Presidium” unless “he or she is caught in the act” (Article 99) which is in broader terms in the 2016 Constitution than the one in 1998. With all this, it is worth saying that the SPA has a number of specific responsibilities as outlined in Article 97:

> *“The Supreme People’s Assembly issues laws, ordinances and decisions. Laws, ordinances and decisions of the Supreme People’s Assembly are adopted when more than half of the deputies attending signify approval by a show of hands. The Constitution is amended or supplemented with the*

approval of more than two-thirds of the total number of deputies to the Supreme People's Assembly"

This is expanded from 1998, which only said the SPA could issue "laws and decisions." Similarly, in the newest Constitution, deputies are allowed to present items to be considered, which wasn't said explicitly in 1998, with the "Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, the State Affairs Commission," Presidium of the SPA, Cabinet, and Committees of the SPA also allowed to present "items to be considered" (Article 95). In 2019, the constitution was reformed: The Chairman of the State Affairs Commission was designated as the head of state, cannot stand as a candidate for election as a deputy to the SPA, and is elected and relieved by a majority vote in its plenary sessions. The President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly is still tasked to receive the credentials and letters of recall of foreign diplomatic representatives, with the Chairman of the SAC now having responsibly to appoint and relieve these diplomats. The orders of the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission is made superior to the ordinances of the Supreme People's Assembly save for more important ordinances which the Chairman may now enact, alongside the decrees and decisions made by the SAC.

Last but not least are the authorities of the SPA, outlined in Article 91, to:

- "amend or supplement the Constitution"
- "adopt, amend or supplement laws"
- "approve the major laws adopted by the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, when the Supreme People's Assembly is not in session"
- "establish the basic principles of the State's domestic and foreign policies"
- "elect or recall the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea...the President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly...the Vice-Chairmen and members of the State Affairs Commission on the recommendation of the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea...the Vice-Presidents, Honorary Vice-Presidents, Secretary and members of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly...the Premier of the Cabinet...the President of the Central Court...the Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and members of the Committees of the Supreme People's Assembly"
- "appoint the Vice-Premiers, Chairmen, Ministers [like those from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] and other members of the Cabinet on the recommendation of the Premier of the Cabinet"
- "appoint or remove the Prosecutor General of the Central Public Prosecutors Office;
- "deliberate and approve the State plan for the development of the national economy and the report on its implementation"
- "deliberate and approve the State budget and the report on its implementation"
- "hear a report on the work of the Cabinet and the central bodies when necessary, and adopt relevant measures"
- "decide on ratification and nullification of treaties suggested to the Supreme People's Assembly"

Some of the legislative powers, like the ability to revise the constitution, adopt and revise laws, work on a state budget, appoint members of the cabinet (with the recommendation of the Cabinet premier) hear the report of the Cabinet's work, ratify or nullify treaties, are common for parliaments and legislatures across the world. However, the above shows the SPA, which is the people's legislature (hence the name "Supreme People's Assembly") is the highest element of power in Juche Korea as it can establish domestic and foreign policy, deliberate the State plan on the economy, appoint or remove the Prosecutor General, and most importantly, elect or recall the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, President of the SPA Presidium, members of the State Affairs Commission on the recommendation of the Chairman, members of the SPA Presidium, the Cabinet Premier, President of the Central Court, and members "of the Committees of the Supreme People's Assembly." This makes all of these individuals accountable to the SPA, and more fundamentally accountable to the population at large, who have the right to elect and recall these members through their representatives.

> *"Every five years they have a general election for the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), they also have city, provincial and county elections. The candidates are chosen prior to the election not by the Workers Party of Korea,* ***but by mass meetings*** *that are organized by the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland (DFRF). The DFRF is composed by the WPK, the Chondoist and the Korean Social-Democratic Party. In these meetings, debates are held and attempts at consensus are made. Once the candidates have been chosen, their names are in the ballot box. For the SPA, they elect their deputies. After the election, the SPA goes to a meeting* ***were they hold another internal election*** *to elect the following: the President, the Prime-Minister and the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, and these all must be an elected Deputy to hold such a position. The President is responsible for signing treaties involving the DPRK and other countries, among other foreign matters; currently, this position is held by Kim Yong Nam, and despite having the name 'Kim', he's not related to Kim Jong Un. The Prime-Minister manages the ministries, that in turn manage internal affairs such as the economy. This position is held by Pak Jong Ju. Finally, the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission is the commander of the DPRK's armed forces. This is the position that Kim Jong Un currently holds. The last election for the SPA's*

> *deputies was in 2014. Contrary to popular belief, both Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un (Kim Il Sung is the exception)* ***rarely occupied positions such as the Prime-Minister or the President****. Most of the times, they were the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, and…received the title of 'Supreme Commander', which is* ***more a ceremonial [title]*** *than political one [by any stretch]"*

The Chairman is "responsible for things like declaring state of war or state of emergency, and all other things related to managing the armed forces in case of conflict" but that "legislation is not made by the Chairman, or any of the above. Its made by the SPA in joint sessions and voted by their 687 deputies."With that discussion, it brings us to Section 2 of Chapter 6, titled "the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." The State Affairs Commission superseded the National Defence Commission, with Kim Il Sung (from 1972 to 1993) and Kim Jong Il (from 1993 to 2011) as chairmen of this commission, while Kim Jong Un was the First Chairman of the commission from 2012 to 2016, and has been chairman of the State Affairs Commission since 2016, with the new Constitution. As such, looking at this section is important to disprove the "autocratic" nature of Juche Korea claimed by some. Unlike Section 1, which had 13 articles dedicated to explaining the SPA, its duties, responsibilities, and role as the highest organ of state power, this section has only has six articles! The 1998 and 2016 versions have a number of similarities. In the 106 version, the chairman of the State Affairs Commission described as the "supreme leader" of the country (Article 100). Some may say this "proves" that the chairman runs the state, however, their term of office is the same as that of the SPA, meaning this person would have to be elected by the SPA every five years, meaning that if the SPA didn't like the chairman, this person could be recalled, similar to what the 1998 version said (Article 101). In this position, not surprisingly, the the Chairman is Supreme Commander of the country's armed forces, commanding and directing all of the State's armed forces, which is basically what was the case in 1998 (Article 102). Furthermore, this chairman can issue orders (Article 104) but is, as noted earlier, "accountable to the Supreme People's Assembly" (Article 105), meaning that he (so far, but women could, under the constitution, hold this position) is accountable to the populace. There is only one article which outlines the seven "duties and authority," allowing the Chairman to:

- direct the overall affairs of the State;

- personally guide the work of the State Affairs Commission;

- appoint or remove key cadres of the State;
- ratify or rescind major treaties concluded with other countries;
- exercise the right of granting special pardon;
- proclaim a state of emergency, a state of war and mobilization order within the country;
- organize and direct the National Defence Committee in wartime

While the 1998 version said that the Chairman had the duty to guide armed forces, create institutions in the “defence sector,” appoint or remove “major military cadres,” create new military titles, and proclaim a state of war, with orders for mobilization, the powers which are shown above. However, the Chairman now has the authority to “direct the overall affairs of the state,” personally guide the work of the Commission, ratify or rescind major treaties, exercise the right of special pardon, proclaim a state of emergency, and organize and direct a National Defence Committee during wartime. Some may, falsely, interpret this as a dictatorship. However, points 2, and 6, 7, on the list above, are focused on the military. Point 5, also on the above list, is almost a ceremonial duty. Some may be reminded that the SPA has the power to “decide on ratification and nullification of treaties suggested to the Supreme People’s Assembly” and may say that the Chairman’s power (in point 4) to “ratify or rescind major treaties concluded with other countries” invalidates such a power of the SPA. This is false. The Chairman’s power of ratifying and rescinding treaties is, if one interprets these two provisions, in response to the action of the SPA. He would not have the power to ratify or rescind such treaties if the SPA had not conducted action on these same documents, as he is accountable to the SPA - don’t forget. Then there’s point 3, which says that the Chairman can “appoint or remove key cadres of the State.” This mirrors the 1998 constitution, which says that the Chairman can “appoint or remove major military cadres.” Using the Webster’s New World College Dictionary (Fourth Edition), a bourgeois dictionary, it means a member of a small unified political group or operational unit, “as of staff officers and key personnel.” This means that the Chairman cannot just remove any party member, but rather this would apply to key government officials, with his appointment of such officials undoubtedly needing some input from the SPA. Finally, there is point 1, saying that the Chairman has the power to “direct the overall affairs of the State.” Some may decry: this makes it a “dictatorship”! Again, this is wrong. The word “direct” is a late Middle English word which derives from the Latin word directus, which was the past participle of dirigere, meaning "arrange in direct lines" or "to guide" (John Ayto, Dictionary of Word Origins: The History of More than 8,000 English Language Words (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1990), p 173; The Oxford Dictionary of Word Histories (ed. Glynnis Chantrell, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp 151-152; Marc McCutcheon, Roget's Super Thesaurus (2nd Edition, Cincinnati, OH: Writers Digest Books, 1998), p 173).

This word, once English started to mean "straighten", or "guide" which synonyms like "manage, orchestrate, guide, control...oversee, supervise, guide...steer, orient, focus" with "obey" and "follow" as antonyms. From this, you can say that the authority to "direct the overall affairs of the State" means that the Chairman guides and orients the state and its actions in order to more forward the efforts of social reconstruction. Even so, this does not mean he is a dictator. In Latin, the term dictator meant a magistrate who was "appointed in times of crisis and given absolute authority" for a maximum six-month or one-year term, like Julius Caesar (Michael Parenti, The Assassination of Julius Caesar: A People's History of Ancient Rome (New York: The New Press, 2003), p 163). Under the Constitution, the Chairman does not have such "absolute authority" and, as noted so far, the State is not ruled by a "single or sole ruler" as it would be in a monarchy or by a person who wields "absolute power and authority," engaging in the "unreasoned, unpredictable use of one's authority in accord with one's own will or desire." The power and authority of the government lies with the SPA, not with the Chairman. In fact, you could call the Chairman a "ruler" using the same bourgeois dictionary, since he guides the country, but he does not have "supreme authority" with the title of "supreme leader" basically a ceremonial one, as he does not have absolute power in the DPRK. That brings us to Section 3 of Chapter 6, titled the "State Affairs Commission." This cannot be compared to the 1998 Constitution because, at the time, this section did not exist. This body, which is headed by the Chairman, is considered "the supreme policy-oriented leadership body of State power" (Article 106) with its members being "the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and members" (Article 107). The term of office for those on the commission is the same as that of the SPA: five years (Article 109), and while it can "issue decisions and directives" like the Chairman can issue orders (Article 110), it is, like all elected or appointed positions, within the government, "accountable to the Supreme People's Assembly" (Article 111). The commission itself has only three duties and authorities, laid out in Article 109, even less than the Chairman:

- discuss and decide important policies of the State, including those for defence building;

- exercise supervision over the fulfillment of the orders of the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK and the decisions and directives of the State Affairs Commission, and take measures for their fulfillment;

- abrogate [repeal or annul] decisions and directives of State organs which run counter to the orders of the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the decisions and directives of the State Affairs Commission

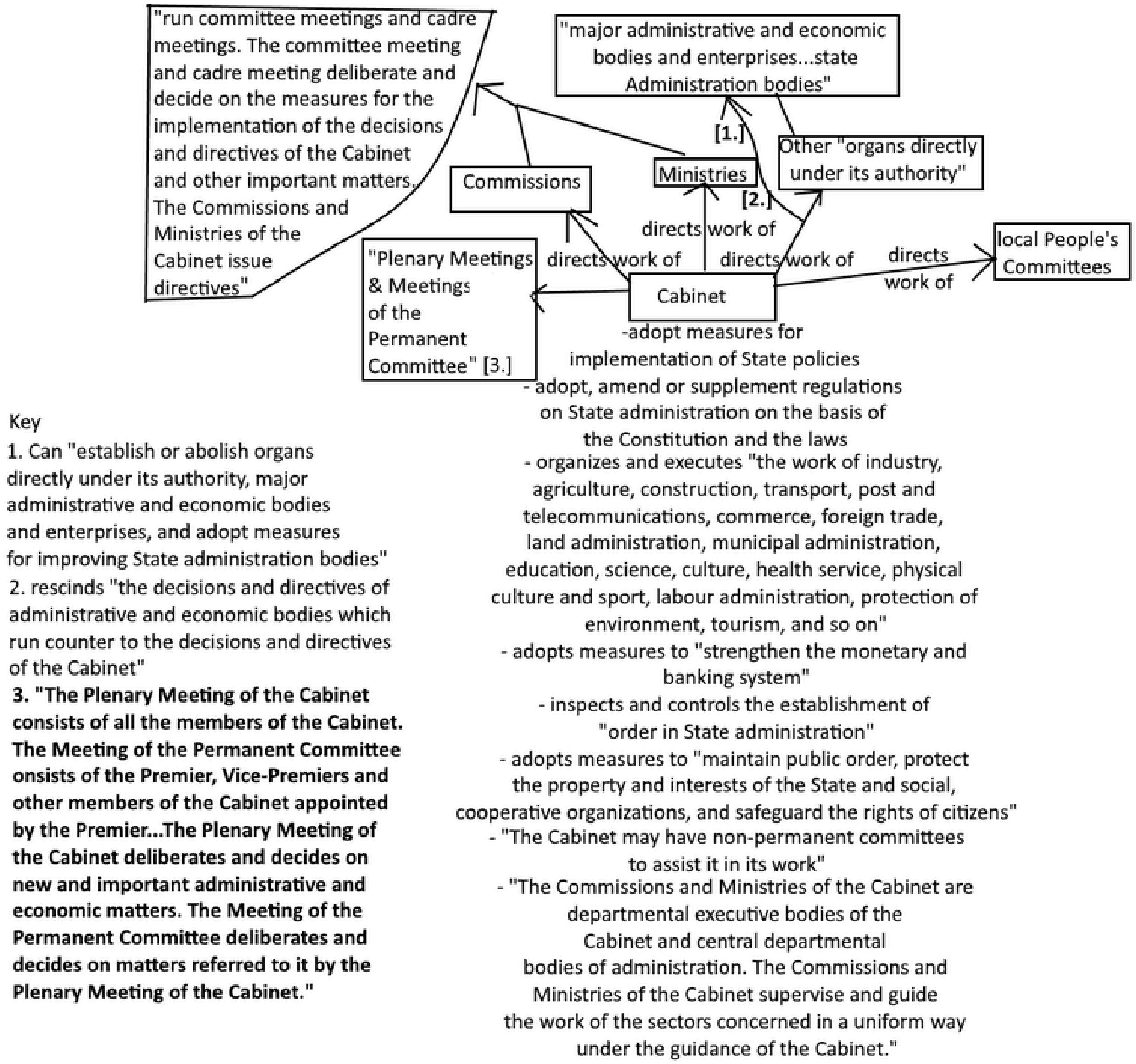
The above shows that the commission would "discuss and decide" important State policies, meaning that the commission would reach a judgment or determination on important State policies, but it does not say that this commission would implement them, as such policies would still need to be approved by the SPA. Additionally, these policies would likely be mostly relating to the military. The supervision of the Chairman's orders and the decisions and directives of the commission, with efforts to execute such efforts, means that this body is an executive body in that it executes executive authorities. However, it is not implementing the laws of the SPA, but just those directives and decisions made by the commission and the Chairman's orders. It is my thinking that the "National Defense Commission" was changed to the State Affairs Commission so that this commission wasn't just focused on defense of the country, but was more broad, covering all state policy, allowing for more discussion and deliberation. Another executive who is often ignored in the bourgeois media as they want to focus on the "supreme leader," who has little power as discussed earlier and could be said to be a bit of a figurehead, is the SPA Presidium, which was mentioned briefly in an earlier point of this article. The current President of the Presidium is Kim Jong-nam. The SPA Presidium is discussed in detail in section 4 of chapter 6, which has changed slightly from 1998. For one, the SPA Presidium is a body which is the "highest organ of State power" (Article 112) when the SPA is not in session, consisting of the "President, Vice-President, Secretary" and other members (Article 113). Additionally, this body, as stated in Article 114, may have a few "Honorary Vice-Presidents" who can be deputies in the SPA who have "participated in the work of State building" for some time and have "distinguished service" meaning that the term "honorary" is one that is ceremonial in nature. Those within this body have terms of office which are five years long, the same as the SPA, with the Presidium continuing its work "until a new Presidium is elected, even after the term of the Supreme People's Assembly expires" (Article 115). While this government body, part of the SPA, can issue "decrees, decisions and directives" (Article 120) and even have "Committees to assist it in its work" (Article 121) it is still "accountable to the Supreme People's Assembly" (Article 122). In order to carry out these decisions, directives, and decrees, it convenes "Plenary Meetings and Meetings of the Permanent Committee" with the plenary meetings consisting of members of the Presidium, and the meeting of the Permanent Committee consisting of only "the President, Vice-Presidents and Secretary" (Article 118). Furthermore, the Plenary Meeting "deliberates and decides on important matters arising in fulfilling the duties of the Presidium and exercising its authority" while the Meeting of the Permanent Committee "deliberates and decides on matters entrusted to it by the Plenary Meeting" (Article 119), meaning that the Permanent Committee and Plenary Meeting are interdependent on each other.

Specific members of the Presidium have certain duties. The President organizes and guides the work of the governmental body, representing the State, receiving "credentials and letters of recall" from diplomatic representatives of foreign countries (Article 117). More broadly, the Presidium itself has 19 duties, outlined in Article 116, the last of which was new in the 2016 Constitution (not in the 1998 version). Point 1, of the Presidium's list of duties, says that this governmental body has the important duty of convening "sessions of the Supreme People's Assembly." This is connected with Point 2, the adoption and deliberation of new draft regulations, bills, amendments and supplements to current regulations and laws between each session of the SPA, working to obtain "approval of the next session of the Supreme People's Assembly for major laws which are adopted and enforced." The same is the case with point 3, the approval and deliberation of "the State plan for the development of the national economy, the State budget and plans for their adjustment which are raised "for unavoidable reasons in the intervals between sessions of the Supreme People's Assembly." Almost like the Supreme Court in the U$, this body interprets the "Constitution as well as current laws and regulations" (point 4) but also works to make sure laws are observed "by the State organs and take relevant measures" as a result (point 5). This is further buttressed by the efforts the Presidium goes to work with the deputies and committees of the SPA (points 8 and 9). Apart from the formalities of issuing "decorations, medals, titles of honour and diplomatic ranks and confer decorations, medals and titles of honour" (point 16) and granting "general amnesties" (point 17), this governmental body can: set up or abolish cabinet ministries or commissions (point 10), and establish or alter administrative districts or units (point 18), appoint or remove members of committees of the Presidium itself (point 12). Related powers include the ability to elect or recall People's Assessors and Judges of the Central Court (point 13), appoint or recall "diplomatic representatives to other countries" (point 15), and the removal or appointment of "Vice-Premiers, Chairmen, Ministers and other members of the Cabinet" the Premier of the Cabinet's recommendation "when the Supreme People's Assembly is not in session" (point 11). Like the SPA and the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, the Presidium has powers when it comes to treaties. Specifically, it can "approve or nullify treaties concluded with other countries" (point 14). While the Chairman's power of ratifying and rescinding treaties is in response to the action of the SPA, the Presidium's power is the next step after the SPA's action, which decides if treaties should be ratified or nullified.

The Presidium is more than just a legislative/executive body, but it also looks to make sure the laws of the country are aligned. This is through its power, in point 6, to "rescind the decisions and directives of State bodies which run counter to the Constitution, laws, ordinances and decisions of the Supreme People's Assembly, orders of the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the decisions and directives of the State Affairs Commission, and the decrees, decisions and directives of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, and suspend the implementation of unwarranted decisions of local People's Assemblies" which is almost like the US Supreme Court declaring laws unconstitutional, but is more wide-reaching, as this is important to maintain the democratic nature of society. Even so, this comparison is not meant to say that this governmental body has judicial powers, because it does not (the court system has those powers). Connected to this is the fact that the Presidium also serves as an election management body, by conducting "the election of deputies to the Supreme People's Assembly" and organizing "the elections of deputies to the local People's Assemblies" (point 7) which is, again, an important part of democracy in the DPRK. Finally, the Presidium, which has electoral, legislative, and executive powers, also has a diplomatic role: it conducts "external activities including contacts with foreign parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations" (point 19). We then get to section 5, of Chapter 6, titled "The Cabinet" which has been slightly changed over the years, with more clarification in the 2016 constitution. The Cabinet is fundamentally an executive and administrative body (Article 123) and consists of the "Premier, Vice-Premiers, Chairmen, Ministers and other members" with their term of office being five years, the same as the SPA (Article 124). This means that Chairman Kim Jong-Un is part of the cabinet, but not its head as will be explained in the next paragraph.

Certain members have specific duties. The Premier, who "organizes and guides the work of the cabinet" represents the government itself (Article 126). While Kim Il Sung was the premier of the cabinet from 1948 to 1972, no member of the Kim family has held the position since, with Pak Pong-ju as the current Premier, who "began his career as a manager of the Ryongchon Food Factory in Ryongchon County, North Pyongan." He was premier from 2003 to 2007, after which he reportedly "fell out of favor," replaced by Kim Yong Il (who became the new Premier) and became "instrumental in formulating and executing new economic laws promulgated in the summer of 2010 involving labor rights and the protection of SOEs and JVs in the DPRK" before starting his second term as Premier, which has lasted from 2013 to the present. Each Premier, who has been newly-elected, "takes an oath of allegiance on behalf of the members of the Cabinet at the Supreme People's Assembly" (Article 132). There are other powers of the Cabinet, which are important to the conducting of governmental duties. For one, the Cabinet can convene "Plenary Meetings and Meetings of the Permanent Committee" with the former meetings consisting of all Cabinet members, and the latter only consisting of the "Premier, Vice-Premiers and other members of the Cabinet appointed by the Premier" (Article 127). As Article 128 outlines, the Plenary Meeting "deliberates and decides on new and important administrative and economic matters" while the Permanent Committee "deliberates and decides on matters referred to it by the Plenary Meeting of the Cabinet" meaning that the Plenary Meeting and Permanent Committee are interdependent on each other (Article 128). In order to assist with its other work, the Cabinet may "have non-permanent committees" (Article 130), along with commissions and ministries (like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), serving as executive and administrative bodies, supervising and guiding work of "the sectors concerned" in a uniform way and under the Cabinet's guidance (Articles 133 and 134). Apart from this, these ministries and commissions have their own powers: they can run "committee meetings and cadre meetings" with both of these meetings deliberating and deciding on measures to implement the "decisions and directives of the Cabinet and other important matters" (Article 135) and they can "issue directives" (Article 136).

The Cabinet, as a whole, can issue "decisions and directives" (in 1998 it only "adopted" decisions and directives) as stated in Article 129. This encompasses many areas, as outlined in Article 125. For one, the Cabinet can adopt measures to implement State policies and can also amend, adopt, or supplement "regulations on State administration" on the basis of the country's laws and the constitution itself. Additionally, it can draft the State plan for the "development of the national economy" and adopt measures "measures to put it into effect" after this plan has been approved by the SPA, of course. The Cabinet also has the power to compile the State budget, and adopt measures to implement this budget after the SPA has approved the budget. On its own authority, the Cabinet can adopt measures to "strengthen the monetary and banking system," inspect and control the "establishment of order in State administration" in order to ensure government efficiency. Also, this governmental body can abolish or establish organs, which includes "major administrative and economic bodies and enterprises" while can also "adopt measures for improving State administration bodies." Complementing this, the Cabinet can adopt measures to maintain "public order, protect the property and interests of the State and social, cooperative organizations, and safeguard the rights of citizens.” More importantly, the Cabinet has the power to “organize and execute” the work of “industry, agriculture, construction, transport, post and telecommunications, commerce, foreign trade, land administration, municipal administration, education, science, culture, health service, physical culture and sport, labour administration, protection of environment, [and] tourism” to name a few. It also serves as a check on any other governmental body by being able to “rescind the decisions and directives of administrative and economic bodies which run counter to the decisions and directives of the Cabinet.” The Cabinet also has the power to “conclude treaties with foreign countries and conduct external affairs” which, of course, still has to be deliberated by the SPA, approved by the Presidium, and ratified or rescinded by the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission, following the actions of previous governmental bodies. This connects all these elements. Most importantly of all, the Cabinet has the power to “direct the work of the Commissions and Ministries of the Cabinet, organs directly under its authority and local People’s Committees.” This is an important part of the functioning of the governmental system and keeping other parts of democracy in Juche Korea aligned with each other.


"major administrative and economic bodies and enterprises...state Administration bodies"
[1.]
Other "organs directly under its authority"
Commissions
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directs work of
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Cabinet
local People's Committees
"Plenary Meetings & Meetings of the Permanent Committee" [3.]

"run committee meetings and cadre meetings. The committee meeting and cadre meeting deliberate and decide on the measures for the implementation of the decisions and directives of the Cabinet and other important matters. The Commissions and Ministries of the Cabinet issue directives"

-adopt measures for implementation of State policies
- adopt, amend or supplement regulations on State administration on the basis of the Constitution and the laws
- organizes and executes "the work of industry, agriculture, construction, transport, post and telecommunications, commerce, foreign trade, land administration, municipal administration, education, science, culture, health service, physical culture and sport, labour administration, protection of environment, tourism, and so on"
- adopts measures to "strengthen the monetary and banking system"
- inspects and controls the establishment of "order in State administration"
- adopts measures to "maintain public order, protect the property and interests of the State and social, cooperative organizations, and safeguard the rights of citizens"
- "The Cabinet may have non-permanent committees to assist it in its work"
- "The Commissions and Ministries of the Cabinet are departmental executive bodies of the Cabinet and central departmental bodies of administration. The Commissions and Ministries of the Cabinet supervise and guide the work of the sectors concerned in a uniform way under the guidance of the Cabinet."

Key

1. Can "establish or abolish organs directly under its authority, major administrative and economic bodies and enterprises, and adopt measures for improving State administration bodies"
2. rescinds "the decisions and directives of administrative and economic bodies which run counter to the decisions and directives of the Cabinet"
3. **"The Plenary Meeting of the Cabinet consists of all the members of the Cabinet. The Meeting of the Permanent Committee onsists of the Premier, Vice-Premiers and other members of the Cabinet appointed by the Premier...The Plenary Meeting of the Cabinet deliberates and decides on new and important administrative and economic matters. The Meeting of the Permanent Committee deliberates and decides on matters referred to it by the Plenary Meeting of the Cabinet."**

With these powers, the Cabinet, like other parts of the government, is still "accountable to the Supreme People's Assembly and to the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly when the Supreme People's Assembly is not in session" (Article 131) meaning that it is accountable to the DPRK masses. The local People's Assembly (Chapter 6, Section 6), which is talked about in Articles 137 to 144 of the Constitution, is another part of the DPRK democratic system, with few changes between the 1998 and 2016 Constitutions. Not only are local People's Assemblies on the level of a province or municipality, city or district, and county, making them the "local organ of State power" but they consist of "deputies elected on the principle of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot" (Articles 137 & 138). Their terms of office are four years, are elected "according to the decision of the local People's Committee at the corresponding level," and when there are "unavoidable circumstances" which "render an election impossible," the term of office of deputy of a local People's Assembly is prolonged "until an election can be held" (Article 139). Like the SPA, a local People's Assembly has "regular and extraordinary sessions" with regular sessions once or twice a year as convened by the "People's Committee at the corresponding level" and extraordinary sessions "convened when the People's Committee at the corresponding level deems them necessary" or at the request of a "minimum of one-third of the total number of deputies" (Article 141). Additionally, like the SPA, a local People's Assembly "requires a quorum of at least two-thirds of the total number of deputies in order to meet" and elects a speaker (but not a Vice-Speaker) who presides over the assembly's sessions (Articles 142 and 143). A local People's Assembly can issue decisions (Article 144) on a number of issues. As outlined in Article 140, a local People's Assembly can:

- "deliberate and approve the local plan for the development of the national economy and the report on its implementation"
- "deliberate and approve the local budget and the report on its implementation"
- "adopt measures to observe State laws in the area concerned"
- "elect or recall the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary and members of the People's Committee at the corresponding level"
- "elect or recall the Judges and People's Assessors of the Court at the corresponding level"
- "rescind unwarranted decisions and directives of the People's Committee at the corresponding level and the People's Assemblies and People's Committees at lower levels"

As such, it is basically a SPA at the local level, showing that the masses have control of the State as a whole. This is because they can elect deputies to their local People's Assembly and SPA, and be elected, allowing them to express themselves through the country's political system, using it to improve their own means. As article 4 of the Constitution states, "the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea resides in the workers, peasants, soldiers, working intellectuals and all other working people. The working people exercise State power **through their representative organs–the Supreme People's Assembly and local People's Assemblies at all levels**." Over the years, there have been a number of local elections the DPRK. They started in November 1946 (Yonhap News Agency, *North Korea Handbook* (Seoul: East Gate Book, 2003), p 930), always with full participation, with bourgeois sources claiming there was 100% approval rate for members, which is likely a distortion. If we take the latter into account, this would reflect what Commie Dad said (as quoted earlier in this article): that candidates on the ballot are "chosen in mass meetings held under the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland, which also organizes the political parties in the DPRK" with citizens running under these parties or as independents, with the fact that there is "only one candidate on the ballot is because there has already been a consensus reached on who should be up for nomination for that position, by the people in their mass meetings." Hence, as he wrote, "the masses advocate for themselves directly…[and] the DPRK does in fact allow foreign observers of their election." Since the elections in November 1946, there have been elections on the local level, for local committees and assemblies, expressing the wills of the masses, in February and March 1947, March 1949, November 1956, November 1959, 1963, November 1967, February 1975, March 1977, March 1981, 1983, 1985, November 1989, November 1993, March 1999, August 2003, July 2007, July 2011, and July 2015, with 774,598 individuals elected on the local level over those years (Yonhap News Agency, *North Korea Handbook* (Seoul: East Gate Book, 2003), p 126, 185, 930, 949; American University, *Area handbook for Korea*, Page 278; Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, Communism in Korea: The movement (Ilchokak, Jan 1, 1972), 572; Barry Gills (bourgeois academic), *Korea versus Korea: A Case of Contested Legitimacy* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 214; The Statesman's Year-Book 1987-88, ed. J. Paxton, xxxviii; old KCNA articles (linked and cited here); *"Report on Results of Local Elections in DPRK Released". Korean Central News Agency, Pyongyang, in English. 21 July 2015)! The upcoming elections on the local level are to be next held in 2019. We can't forget when the Washington Post published a map by the Electoral Integrity Project describing the DPRK and Cuba as having "moderate quality elections," the same category that the US was in!* Section 7, of Chapter 6, of the Constitution of Juche Korea, outlines the organization which oversees the local People's Assembly: the local People's Committee, with such committees overseeing local People's Assemblies across the country. The same structures that were in place in 1998 are still in place in the 2016 Constitution. Such a committee, which is is located in a province, municipality, city (or district) or county, "exercises the function of the local organ of State power when the People's Assembly at the corresponding level is not in session and the administrative and executive organ of State power at the corresponding level" and consists of "the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary and members" with the term of office the "same as that of the corresponding People's Assembly": four years (Articles 145 & 146). It convenes Plenary Meetings and Meetings of the Permanent Committee, the former of which consist of all of the committee's members, and the latter which consists of "the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Secretary," the Plenary Meetings deliberate and decide on "important matters arising in implementing its duties and exercising its authority" while the Meetings of the Permanent Committee deliberate and decide "on the matters referred to it by the Plenary Meeting," meaning that the two are interdependent (Articles 148 & 149). Such a committee may also "have non-permanent committees to assist it in its work" (Article 151).

As an institution which "issues decisions and directives" (Article 150), and is accountable to the "corresponding People's Assembly" while being "subordinate to the People's Committees at higher levels, the Cabinet and the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly" (Article 152) it is important to outline its duties and authorities. The latter are pointedly listed in Article 147:

1. it can "convene sessions of the People's Assembly" and organize "the election of deputies to the People's Assembly" while working with "the deputies to the People's Assembly"
2. it organizes and carries out "all administrative affairs in the given area"
3. drafts the "local plan for the development of the national economy and adopt measures to implement it" (local plan is approved by corresponding People's Assembly)
4. compiles "the local budget and adopt[s] measures for its implementation," a budget which is approved by the corresponding People's Assembly
5. adopts "measures to maintain public order, protect the property and interests of the State and social, cooperative organizations and safeguard the rights of citizens in the given area"
6. inspects and controls "the establishment of order in State administration in the given area"
7. directs "the work of the People's Committees at lower levels"
8. rescinds "unwarranted decisions and directives of the People's Committees at lower levels, and suspend the implementation of unwarranted decisions of the People's Assemblies at lower levels"
9. implements "the decisions and directives of the corresponding local People's Assembly and the People's Committees at higher levels, the laws, ordinances and decisions of the Supreme People's Assembly, the orders of the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People' Republic of Korea, the decisions and directives of the State Affairs Commission, the decrees, decisions and directives of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly and the decisions and directives of the Cabinet and the Commissions and Ministries of the Cabinet"

So, the local People's Committee is basically a Presidium on the local level, providing another check and balance in this system, unlike the US system which supposedly has such "checks and balances," but this is just a way to cover up the reality of the US system: it is a plutocratic and inherently unequal bourgeois democracy. Ellen Brun, an economist whose 1976 Socialist Korea study remains the most comprehensive to date for understanding these systems, writes that "In spite of lack of modern means of production, the cooperatives – with efficient assistance by the state – very early showed their superiority to individual farming, eventually convincing formerly reluctant farmers into participating in the movement" (Ellen Brun, Jacques Hersh, Socialist Korea: A Case Study in the Strategy of Economic Development, 1976, Monthly Review Press, New York and London).

Often a point of criticism from left-communists, Trotskyites, and anticommunists, collectivization in the DPRK did not result in any famine or mass starvation. In fact, “at no time during cooperativization did the agricultural output decrease; on the contrary, the process was accompanied by a steady increase in production.” Citing statistics of food production, Brun shows a sharp increase from about 2.9 million tons in 1956 to 3.8 million tons in 1960. (Stemming from Democratic Korea’s push for self-sufficiency, the WPK put the nation on a path to increase its food production steadily and feed the entire country. Local people’s committees, in which any Korean worker could participate, elected leadership to guide agricultural production and collaborated with national authorities to coordinate nation-wide efficiency. These people’s committees were the primary means by which “the Party remains in contact with the masses on the various collective farms, thus enabling it to gauge public opinion on issues affecting the policies of the country people’s committee.” In 1966, the WPK introduced the “group management system,” which “organized groups of ten to twenty-five farmers into production units, each of which was then put permanently in charge of a certain area of land, a certain task, or a certain instrument of production.” This represents another instrument of people’s democracy implemented in Korean socialist production.

No serious antagonism between the countryside and industrial centers developed in the process of socialist construction in Democratic Korea. Brun notes that “tens of thousands of demobilized men and many junior and senior graduates as well as middle school pupils went to the countryside in the busy seasons and rendered assistance amounting to millions of days of work,” all voluntarily and without coercion by the state. Even though the study is from the 70’s and is a poor study to use to try and explain the modern DPRK with, it is also worth noting that Brun writes the following:

> Ways of solving questions affecting production and workers’ activities, as well as methods of carrying out decisions, are arrived at through collective discussions within the factory committee, whose members are elected by the factory’s Party members. To be effective this committee has to be relatively small, its precise numbers depending on the size of the enterprise. At the Daean Electrical Plant, with a labor force of 5,000, the Party factory committee is made up of 35 members who meet once or twice a month, while the 9 members of the executive board keep in continuous contact. Sixty percent of its members are production workers, with the remainder representing a cross-section of all factory activities, including functionaries, managers, deputy-managers, engineers, technicians, women’s league

> representatives, youth league members, trade union members, and office employees. Its composition thus gives it access to all socioeconomic aspects of the enterprise and the lives of its worker.
>
> This committee has become what is called the 'steering wheel' of the industrial unit, conducting ideological education and mobilizing the workers to implement collective decisions and to fulfill the production target. Through its connection to the Party it has a clear picture of overall policies and aims as well as the exact function of individual enterprise in the national context. In other words, this setup ensures that politics are given priority"

So, what does this all mean? First off, it means that Workers have input and supremacy in production and interact dialectically with the state to plan and carry out collectivist production on behalf of the whole Korean people. It also means that the workplace in Democratic Korea isn't simply a venue for production, but as emphasized with the Taean organizing method, a center for education and enrichment. After 1950, "worker schools" organized at specific workplaces began to emerge, in which laborers would attend middle and high school education programs while working in industry in order to prepare them to continue their education in college. This places the reality of the situation leagues ahead of the simplistic and farcical characterizations of Whitehouse and the ISO of the DPRK as "a country where one man holds dictatorial power and the vast majority of people live in poverty," this model of socialist organization represents the highest commitment to workers democracy. The fact that the economy is managed, often directly, by the whole of society is evidence that the country is a democratic one. Workers are not trapped in top-down workplaces to be ordered around, as are workers in the United States, but rather have a say over what is produced and how it is done. The people have a say over the economy, and thus a say in all other aspects of life. This, as I have argued, means that the country is vastly more democratic than all capitalist countries, even the most advanced.

The final section of Chapter 6 is Section 8, titled "The Public Prosecutor and the Court." It changed only slightly between the 1998 and 2016 versions. Prosecution and investigation carried out by the Central Prosecutors Office, Public Prosecutors of a province, municipality, city, district, or county, and the Special Public Prosecutors Office (Article 153), with the term of office of the Prosecutor General of the Central Prosecutor's Office being five years long, the same as "that of the Supreme People's Assembly" (Article 154). As a check on the power of public prosecutors, they can be "appointed or removed by the Central Public Prosecutors Office" (Article 155), and all "investigation and prosecution" is "conducted under the unified direction of the Central Public Prosecutors Office" with all Public Prosecutors Offices “subordinate to their higher offices and the Central Public Prosecutors Office,” another check (Article 157). Like other elements of government, the Central Public Prosecutors Office is accountable to the SPA and the Presidium of the SPA when the SPA is not in session, showing that the people have a check on the office itself (Article 158). Within Section 8, the functions of the Public Prosecutors Office are listed in Article 156. Not only does this office work to “ensure the strict observance of State laws by institutions, enterprises, organizations and citizens” but it also identifies and institutes “legal proceedings against criminals and offenders in order to protect the State power of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the so-called socialist system, the property of the State and social, cooperative organizations, personal rights as guaranteed by the Constitution and the people’s lives and property.” More than the latter power, its power to:

> “ensure that the decisions and directives of State bodies conform with the Constitution, the laws, ordinances and decisions of the Supreme People’s Assembly, the orders of the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the decisions and directives of the State Affairs Commission, the decrees, decisions and directives of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly, and the decisions and directives of the Cabinet”

That brings us to the second half of section 8: Article 159-168 which focus on the country’s Central Court. This court is independent, but also works to administer justice, with “judicial proceedings are carried out in strict accordance with the law” (Article 166) and the Central Court serving as the “highest judicial organ of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” (like the U$ Supreme Court) and supervising “the judicial activities of all the Courts” (Article 167). Furthermore, the Central Court is accountable to the SPA and the SPA Presidium “when the Supreme People’s Assembly is not in session” (Article 168). The term of office for the President of the Central Court being five years, “the same as that of the Supreme People’s Assembly” (Article 158). On the other hand, the term “of office of Judges and People’s Assessors of the Central Court, the Court (People’s Court) “of a province, municipality, City, District, or County, “is the same as that of the People’s Assembly at the corresponding level” or four years. Furthermore, justice is

> “*administered by the Central Court, the Court of a province (or municipality directly under central authority), the City (or District) or*

County People's Courts, and the Special Court. Verdicts are delivered in the name of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea"

In a check on the power of the courts, the judges and president "of the Special Court are appointed or removed by the Supreme Court" and the People's Assessors "of the Special Court are elected by the soldiers of the unit concerned or by employees at their meetings" (Article 161). This is just another example of democracy in the system of the DPRK, not a dictatorship by any stretch, except in the minds of those who hate the country with fury. We then get to Article 162. It says the the Central Court has the governmental function to protect, through its judicial procedures, "the State power and the [so-called] socialist system established in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the property of the State and social, cooperative organizations, personal rights as guaranteed by the Constitution, and the lives and property of citizens," ensure that all "institutions, enterprises, organizations and citizens abide strictly by State laws and staunchly combat class enemies and all law-breakers" (maintain the rule of law) and "give judgement and findings with regard to property and conduct notarial work" or work to certify or attest documents, take depositions or affidavits, as noted in the definitions of "notorial" and "notary public" within Webster's New World College Dictionary (Fourth Edition). Finally, there is Chapter VII, titled "Emblem, Flag, Anthem, and Capital." Between the 1998 and 2016 constitutions, there have been no changes other than "DPRK" changed to Democratic People's Republic of Korea: the national emblem of the country is still the same (Article 169), the national flag is the same (Article 170), the national flag is the same (Article 171), and the capital of Pyongyang is the same (Article 172). In the 1998 Constitution, the provisions for this section were Articles 163-166.

So far, we have talked about the 1998 Constitution (the "Kim Il Sung Constitution") which was adopted by the SPA on Sept 5, 1998 and the 2016 Constitution (the "Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il Constitution" or the "nuclear" constitution). However, there have also been constitutions, which are not "political manifestos" as one bourgeois scholar claimed, in:

- September 1948, the country's first constitution. It was adopted after a "70-day debate nationwide on the draft constitution starting in February of the same year," with the first session of the unicameral SPA meeting that year, with 572 deputies,"representing "workers, peasants, deskworkers, intellectuals, businessmen, merchants and religious people," elected, with the Constitution adopted in early September, with "the founding of the DPRK proclaimed on September 9, resulting in the Korean people celebrating it annually as "their national day."" This constitution was adopted when "a 31-person committee organized by the SPA to deliberate over the draft, with people's opinions taken into account." It is also worth noting, as acknowledged by a bourgeous scholar who thinks Juche Korea is autocratic (they all think that), "the authority to adopt and amend the Constitution in DPRK has belonged the the Supreme People's Assembly since the first North Korean Constitution," with the 1948 Constitution modeled after the 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union, sometimes called the "Stalin Constitution," with this 1948 constitution being "ten chapters and 104 articles," with the SPA modeled after the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, with some bourgeois scholars still saying it didn't have "real power" as they always say about such states. [12] This Constitution says that "the state power of the D.P.R.K. belongs to the people" (Article 2), that "the land owned by the Japanese government and the Japanese nationals as well as the Korean landlords is confiscated" (Article 6), that the "state encourages the development of the cooperative organizations of the people" (Article 9), establishes the Supreme People's Assembly (Article 32) with deputies "elected at the ratio of one deputy for every 50,000 of the population" (Article 35) and the establishes "local organs of state power in provinces, cities, counties or city districts and ri, towns or workers' settlements are the respective people's assemblies" (Article 68), among other provisions. It s worth noting that for the U$, each representative, in the House, "represents" an average of "nearly 700,000" people, leading some to call for increase the number of representatives to 6,000 people in all, with the number of "representatives with full voting rights...435" a number set by law in 1913, with "the number of representatives per state is proportionate to population." It is even worse for the Senate, as there are only 100 members. Combined together, that means 535 people are "representing" over 327.2 million people, which shows the inequity of this system.

- December 1972, the "Juche Constitution." Some say they were unable to find text of this constitution and others summarize it as having no preamble, and incorporating a number of "purely North Korean concepts" and is considered to be a "communist dictoatrship" with all power in the hands of the WPK and Kim Jong Il, while brushing aside the reality that the "Supreme People's Assembly is the highest organ of State Power" with legislative power vested in this unicameral assembly and claiming that the head of the WPK approves all amendments, with the legislature's role as a "formality" in common anti-communist thinking. [13] This constitution was important for introducing the concept of "*chuch'e*"/Juche and showed that the country had gone beyond its socialist transformation of economic management and establishment of a socialist system since this draft was "put to debate two times in plenary meetings of the Workers' Party of Korea, the Social Democratic Party and the Chondoist Chongu Party and at the Central Committee of the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland, and then it was submitted to the SPA, adopted finally (and unanimously) by the deputies on December 27, 1972. As a result, Korean people celebrate this day as Socialist Constitution Day every passing year." This constitution also established "the positions of president and vice presidents and a super-cabinet called the Central People's Committee (CPC)." Others said that it "combines [so-called] socialism and nationalism to produce a document of fundamental law that is unusual, even compared to the Constitutions of other [so-called] Marxian socialist states," "private property was totally eliminated," so-called socialist construction was continued, and there were other elements that were part of the "made-for-Korea socialist system." [14]
- 1992. It was adopted one year after the Koreans, "had a chance to vote for those on the local level...[with] 26,074 people were elected to local and provincial assemblies" and the "final demise of the Soviet Union on December 26." This Constitution "has 171 articles and seven chapters (twenty-two more and four less, respectively, than the 1972 constitution)" with major changes including "the elevation of *chuch'e* [Juche] at the

expense of Marxism-Leninism, the removal of references to the expulsion of foreign troops, and the addition of articles encouraging joint ventures, guaranteeing the "legitimate rights and interests of foreigners" along with "establishing a framework for expanded ties with capitalist countries." Additionally, "the eighteen articles of Chapter 1 deal with politics...In Chapter 2, economic affairs are codified...Culture, education, and public health are covered in Chapter 3...Chapter 5 extensively details the fundamental rights and duties of citizens....Chapter 6, entitled "State Institutions," has eighty articles and eight sections–more sections than any other chapter....Chapter 7, which covers the national emblem, the flag, and capital, describes the first two items, designates P'yongyang as the capital, and names the national anthem. In a change from the previous constitution, the 1992 revision mandates that "the sacred mountain of the revolution"–Paektu-san–be added to the national emblem." [15] This constitution also eliminated the "expression of Marxism-Leninism in conjuction with *juche*" and replaced it with the principle of juche itself, and there were efforts to encourage foreign investment in the DPRK after 1991. This Constitution was also, "aimed at legalizing the achievements and experiences obtained in the past 20 years of revolution, and meeting the new demand for a completion of the Juche revolutionary cause."

- April 2009, the "Shogun Constitution," as some call it, was adopted. This constitution dropped the use of the word "communism." That year, "Koreans voted for candidates for the 12th SPA, with posters reminding the populace of the importance of voting, how it is a civic duty...324, of the 687 deputies in the legislature, were replaced. In the election...deputies were elected for five-year terms, including Kim Jong-Il, but not his son Kim Jong-Un, [with]...the country rightly rejecting any push for "economic liberalisation" in the country, rolling back "moderate economic reforms instituted in 2002."...numerous "technocrats and financial experts" were elected, 107 women were elected, Mr. Choe Thae Bok was elected as a speaker of the assembly, and Kim Jong-il as the Chairman of the National Defense Commission...107 deputies were women, 116 deputies were soldiers, 75 deputies were workers, and 69 deputies were farmers...apart from Kim Jong-Un given high state-level positions...there were revisions to the DPRK's constitution, by removing the the word "communism" from the constitution, replacing it with the term "Songun" or socialism, while giving National Defense Commission (NDC) more governmental power...The new constitution, the Shogun Constitution, also asserts protections of human rights."
- May 2012 revision. That year, Kim Jong-Il "was named as "eternal chairman" of the National Defense Commission," while Kim Jong-Un was "elected as the First Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and chairman of the Central Military Commission, there were a number of "approved amendments to the country's constitution"...When he was elected, at the fourth conference of the party in its history, as First Secretary of the WPK, fellow party members vowed to follow the ideas of Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un's leadership to develop their country, while they demonstrated "the revolutionary will of the people to accomplish the songun (military-first) revolutionary cause under the leadership of Kim Jong Un." Broadly, "section 2 of Chapter 6 and Articles 91, 95 and 100-105, 107, 109, 116, 147 and 156 of the Constitution in line with the institution of the new post of first chairman of the NDC" (National Defense Commission) were revised...while some speculated on economic reforms related to this...In the most recent iteration of the Constitution (revised again in 2013 and 2016), still called the "Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il Constitution," it mentions that Kim Il Sung helped make the country a "nuclear state" and "unchallengable military

> power” in the preamble, with no other mention of it in the rest of the constitution whatsoever...On April 12, 2012,Kim Jong Un gave a rousing speech in Pyongyang’s Kim Il Sung Square, which some thought was a call for the beginning of “China-style economic reform” in the DPRK...[saying that] “today we are standing at the watershed of history, when a new chuch’e century begins...The farsighted strategy of our revolution and ultimate victory lie here in directly proceeding along the path of independence, the path of military-first, and the path of [so-called] socialism unfolded by the great Comrade Kim Il Sung and Comrade Kim Jong Il...It is our party’s resolute determination to let our people who are the best in the world — our people who have overcome all obstacles and ordeals to uphold the party faithfully — not tighten their belts again and enjoy the wealth and prosperity of [so-called] socialism as much as they like...We will have to embark on the comprehensive construction of an economically powerful state by kindling more fiercely, the flames of the industrial revolution of the new century and the flames of South Hamgyong Province.” This constitution was later revised again in April 2013 by the SPA, as noted by the DPRK.

By the way, if we take the estimate of the population of the DPRK in July 2017 by the CIA World Factbook, of 25,248,140, that means that each of the 687 deputies represents an average of about 36,751 people, much lower than the 700,000 that U$ Representatives “represent” on average. Such changes to the Constitution again shows that there is a democratic nature to the DPRK without a doubt. Some may say that there has been a “hereditary” change of power from Kim Il Sung (1948-1994) to Kim Jong Il (1994-2011) and Kim Jong Un (2011-present). This does not realize that with Kim Il Sung as the person who led the Korean people in their struggle against Japanese colonialism, heading the Korean liberation struggle, it was no surprise he became and stayed as the leader of the country, a guiding force. The same can be said for Kim Jong Il, who was, like Kim Il Sung, a savvy politician, and was chosen to continue in Kim Il Sung’s footsteps, improving the Juche ideology, which he would be trusted to so since he was Kim Il Sung’s son. The same can be said for Kim Jong Un (Kim Jong Il’s son), who was age 29 in 2011, since I trust the records of Juche Korea more than that of the ROK or U$. This was much younger than when Kim Jong Il became chairman (at age 52 in 1994) or when Kim Il Sung became Premier (age 36 in 1948). This promises to bring new ideas and thoughts to Juche Korea, which the country needs in the ways ahead, with the Constitution already revised three times since then: in 2012, 2013, and 2016. After all, let's not forget that the SPA was the real center of power in the DPRK, not the positions held by Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il or Kim Jong Un. They are basically figureheads and a guiding force, with more on this subject explained in the next section, disproving the idea of a “cult of personality.” To conclude this, neither Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il or Kim Jong Un had to be chosen or “destined” to be chosen. The SPA elected them, and did not recall them because their policies were seen as agreeable. The same goes for their position as party leader of the WPK. There are other political parties in the DPRK, and neither one of these Kims ended up leading them. So, all talk about it being the “Kim family” or some sort of “monarchy” running the show is poppycock to say the least.

Even with the title of “supreme leader”, it is important to point out the fact that this is *not* a government position, but a party one. In western style bourgeois “democracies”, party power is synonymous with government power - but in Marxist-Leninist styled democracies, government and party are separate entities, as by definition governmental positions are required to be non-partisan, so one does not grant a seat in the other automatically. For emphasis, we can compare how the highest positions in Western, bourgeois democracies break down when compared with that of the DPRK: for the US, we have Donald J. Trump as the President of the United States, Executive Head, Commander in Chief for the Head of the Military, and Head of the Party. Vice President Mike Pence acts as Legislative Head, Trump has the veto, John Glover Roberts Junior is the Judicial Head. Trump is the Head of Foreign Policy. Pompeo is the Vice Foreign Head, Bernhardt the head of Domestic Lands, DeVos the Head of Education, and lastyle, Alex Azar is the Head of Healthcare. Compare this with that of the DPRK, which breaks down as follows: there is no Head-of-State or Premier of the DPRK. The position is officially declared to be vacant, seeing as the position was abolished in 1994. The executive head of the party isn’t Kim Jong-Un, as one would suspect, but instead Kim Jae-Ryong. Kim Jong-Un occupies the Head of the Military, as well as Head of the Party (Chairman of the WPK). These are the only 2 times you’ll see Kim Jong-Un in this breakdown. Choe Ryong-Hae is the Legislative Head of the Party, and the next [highest] legislative power just straight up doesn’t exist again - remember, the DPRK has a single vote system. Kang Yun-Sok is the Judicial Head, Ri Yong-Ho the Head of Foreign Policy, Choe Son-Hul the Vice Foreign Head, Ko In-Ho the Head of Domestic Lands, Kim Sung-Du the Head of Education, and the Head of Healthcare, O Chun-Bok. Noticing any differences here?

And if the recurrence of the name “Kim” concerns you, remember that Kim is one of the most popular names in Asia, with an estimated 20% of people in South Korea in 2015 alone having the name.

There is no “cult of personality”:

Anti-revisionist leader of Albania, Enver Hoxha declared in his political diary, in June 1977, that “genuine Marxist-Leninists” will agree that the “ideology is guiding the Korean Workers’ Party and the Communist Party of China...is revisionist” and added, later that month that “in Pyongyang, I believe that even Tito will be astonished at the proportions of the cult of his host [Kim Il Sung], which has reached a level unheard of anywhere else, either in past or present times, let alone in a country which calls itself [so-called] socialist.” Later on, that summer, he would further declare that “the leadership of the Communist Party of China has betrayed” the working people, and that “in Korea, too, we can say that the leadership of the Korean Workers’ Party is wallowing in the same waters,” claiming that Kim Il Sung was begging for aid from other countries, from states in the Eastern Bloc and “non-aligned” countries like Yugoslavia. As such, relations between People’s Korea and Albania were cold until Hoxha’s death in 1985. The question that comes out of this is obvious: was Hoxha right? We know that Karl Marx had an adversion “to the personality cult,” especially for himself. We also know while a “cult of personality” developed, by the 1930s, around Josef Stalin, General Secretary of the USSR, Stalin was strongly opposed to this, even saying in February 1938 that “I am absolutely against the publication of “Stories of the childhood of Stalin”...the book has a tendency to engrave on the minds of Soviet children (and people in general) the personality cult of leaders, of infallible heroes. **This is dangerous and detrimental**...The people make the heroes, thus reply the

Bolsheviks to the Social-Revolutionaries. The book **carries water to the windmill** of the Social-Revolutionaries. No matter which book it is that brings the water to the windmill of the Social-Revolutionaries, this book is going to drown in our common, Bolshevik cause. I suggest we **burn this book**." This belayed the claims of Nikita Khrushchev in his traitorious "secret speech," in 1956, with the initiator of the "cult of personality" around Stalin being "Karl Radek, who pleaded guilty to treason at his public trial in 1937" and was pushed by Khrushchev in the 1930s, showing that Stalin was right that this "cult" was built up by his opponents. Lest us forget that Khrushchev "tried to introduce elements of market economy and liberalisation" in the Soviet Union and coined horrid phrases such as "cult of personality" and "peaceful co-existence" the former would be used by anti-communists for years to come. After all, Khrushchev also coined the term "Stalinism" and called Stalin a "genius." Later on, some said that Khrushchev's charge of a "cult of personality" ignored the "structures of Soviet society, the role of the Party, and all the other instances that Marxists should use to analyze a specific social formation and a specific situation."

The talk about the "cult of personality" goes beyond Stalin and Marx, since Lenin disliked the idea as well. Some claim that Mao Zedong has such a "cult" when this was not true since he "had led the way in dismantling what had become known as the cult of personality in 1970." Others argued against the idea of the "cult of personality." Some said that it could be avoided "only by the broadest active participation of the whole people in the transformed movement, e.g. after a revolution, in self-government and in national planning, while others said that "the cult of the individual is alien to the Marxist-Leninist concept of collective leadership" saying that the "presence of a powerful personality in the party...fosters the growth and the development of the cult of the individual centering round that personality, while the absence of any such personality leads to the formation of groups inside the party." The latter writer said that "the loss of lives of innocent persons...does not by itself constitute the cult of the individual" and that a "man who suffers from a sense of inflated ego becomes vain and conceited and falls victim to the cult of the individual." Then there was Amiri Baraka. He said that the charge of "cult of personality" was thrown against them from "the right" with fake revolutionaries using it, claiming that "Lenin and the Chinese are backing them up" while they forgot that "the Chinese were criticizing the anti-Stalinist revisionist Krushchevites who attacked Stalin with the cries of "cult of the individual" and "the cult of personality"."

From here, it is worth defining the term "cult of personality" or "cult of the individual." Bourgeois dictionaries claim it is when a public figure is "deliberately presented to the people of a country as a great person who should be admired and loved" (merriam-webster.com), when there is "a cult promoting adulation of a living national leader or public figure" (dictionary.com), or a "deliberately cultivated adulation of a person, esp a political leader" (collinsdictionary.com). Others in bourgeois and related media claim it involves, a charismatic leader with a coherent media strategy and strong public image who embodies "the people but also stand[s] above them," "images of top leaders...cultivated" by the Party, "general faith in the leader," or the use of propaganda "and media tools excessively to create a strongly positive image of himself," saying this applies to "leaders" ranging from Xi Jinping, Mao Zedong, Bashar Al-Assad, Vladimir Putin, Elon Musk, and Barack Obama to the orange menace. Of course, Kim Jong-Il is claimed to be part of such a "cult," as is declared blatantly by bourgeois media like a BBC article in December 2011 titled "Delving into North Korea's mystical cult of personality."With this, there is clearly no consensus, among the bourgeois critics, what the term, "cult of personality" means as many just spout it blindly and explain little. As user put it on /r/communism, "I feel like every leader has a cult of personality." Others noted that Fidel Castro worked actively to counter it in Cuba by having no statues made of himself there. Some said that "while condemning chauvinistic nationalism, Lenin acknowledged working class patriotism...people are not abstractions, nor are their revolutionary movements. They come from somewhere, they have real accomplishments that involve particular parties and leaders. That movements so constituted acquire a face, and other icons isn't something to be casually slighted – it's part of being human...most especially when no one is pretending the classless society had been established." Then there were those who said that "the Cult of Personality is incompatible with communism, in my opinion." This connects to what Mao said in 1956, while criticizing Stalin (and revisionism): "the cult of the individual is a rotten carry-over from the long history of mankind. The cult of the individual is rooted not only in the exploiting classes but also in the small producers." What J. Moufawad Paul wrote about the "cult of personality" or cult of the individual is helpful here:

> *"…due to the fact that the theories that push revolutionary science further often require someone to write them down, to engage in polemics, and concretize an ideology, we often do tend to get caught up in erroneous and bourgeois ideas about individual brilliance. But the Lenins and Maos of the world are just living end-results of a longer process, the last links in an unrecognized revolutionary chain, able to finally provide a concrete analysis of concrete circumstances because they happen to be in the right social position at the right time. To imagine otherwise is to pretend that individual humans are outside of history, that there are such things as "philosopher-kings" or ubermenschen that stand above the herd…whenever we are faced with those individuals who possess the privilege to unify theoretical concepts and rise to positions of leadership…because we are conditioned to think that individuals and not collective people, make history, we often capitulate to greater or lesser degrees of individual worship…Even if we could argue that the adoption of these cults of personalities made sense…that does not mean they possessed any lasting benefit for the revolution…The cult of the individual often takes a more pernicious and sublimated form, pushed under appeals to collectivity and consensus; even in those groups that self-righteously lambast others for capitulation to a daddy figure there might still be a single individual whose word is doctrine, whose opinion matters more than*

> *others, and who treats collective organizing as nothing more than a reflection of his own ego"*

This connects to what was written by a critic in the 1960s: that party workers "maintain[ing] some formalities" along with "thunderous slogans eulogizing him" (Mao) which may appear to be "the cult of personality" but to inspire and involve the masses, then "these would remain as the general form of paying respect" and are necessary, with a revolution not able to be brought "about anywhere avoiding these formalities." The writer then adds that "no individual, not even the leader, is considered infallible...any phenomenon, any entity, even thoughts and ideas, are not taken as absolute, rather they are considered changeable" which are the bases on "which the minimum level of consciousness of people should rest."Now, Webster's New World College Dictionary (Fourth Edition), a bourgeois dictionary, defines a cult as a "devoted attachment to, or extravagant admiration for, a person, principle, or lifestyle," or a "system of religious worship or ritual." It also defines "worship" as a "reverence or devotion" for someone, an "extreme devotion or intense love or admiration of any kind." Some may say, immediately, that what is happening in the DPRK qualifies, citing that horrid Wikipedia page titled "Kim Dynasty" or another about the "cult of personality," claiming that there are hundreds of statues of Kim Il Sung in Juche Korea. The best place to start are the Constitutions of the DPRK over the years, specifically focusing on the preamble, which mentions the country's previous leaders. 1998 Constitution is the first I can find which has a preamble (some say the 1972 Constitution has a preamble but this is clearly a lie). It calls Kim Il Sung a:

- Great leader
- Comrade for applying the idea of Juche (and authoring it), leading the "anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle" under the banner of Juche, founding "the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," leading "various stages of social revolution and construction work" to improve the country, putting forward "the fundamental principles of the building and activities of the State, established the best State and social system, the best mode of politics and system and methods of administering society, and laid solid foundations" for the prosperity of the state

It then says that Kim Il Sung:

> *"always mixed with the people, devoted his whole life for them and turned the whole of society into a large family which is united in one mind by taking care of the people and leading them through his noble benevolent politics"*

On top of that, this constitution calls Kim Il Sung

- the "sun of nation and the lodestar of national reunification," the latter which he pushed forward, and says he "clarified the basic ideals of the foreign policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea"
- a "veteran statesman in the world" who worked to strengthen "the world peace and for friendship among the peoples and made an imperishable contribution to the cause of human independence."
- a "genius in ideology and theory, a master of leadership, an ever-victorious iron-willed brilliant commander, a great revolutionary and politician and a great man" and says that the ideas (and achievements) under his leadership "are the lasting treasures of the Korean revolution and the basic guarantee for the prosperity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

It ends by saying that under the WPK's leadership, the DPRK, and the Korean people "will uphold the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung as the eternal President of the Republic and carry the revolutionary cause of Juche through to completion" by defending and carrying forward his ideas, with the constitution called the "Kim Il Sung's Constitution" as it codifies his "Juche-oriented ideas on and exploits in State building." The 2009 Constitution says something similar, calling him a "great human being" rather than "great man" as the 1998 Constitution asserts. Now, the word "great," defined by the aforesaid mentioned bourgeois dictionary, means someone who is above ordinary or average, distinguished, showing "nobility of mind" and purpose. As for the word "genius," this same dictionary defines it as a person with "great natural ability," inventive ability, or particular character. Even if you accept all these words to apply to Kim Il Sung, saying he created the idea of Juche, founded the DPRK, is a dedicated revolutionary, politician, and theoretician, it does not mean there is "devoted attachment" to him, overblown admiration, or even a "system of religious worship or ritual." Kim Il Sung was the person there guiding the country through hard times, as the Korean people, with help from then-socialist nations, rebuilt the DPRK in the aftermath of the Great Fatherland Liberation War. Additionally, it does not say he is flawless or that he does not engage in mistakes. Kim scorned Korea's inability to resist foreign domination. The Japanese regarded him as a highly able and dangerous guerilla leader, going so far as to establish a special anti-Kim insurgency unit to hunt him down (Journal of Church and State 48 (2006), pp. 659-75). The guerillas were an independent force, inspired by a desire to reclaim the Korean peninsula for Koreans, and were controlled by neither the Soviets nor Chinese. While they often retreated across the border into the Soviet Union to evade Japanese counter-insurgency forces, they received little material help from the Soviets. Unlike the US, which imposed a military government and repressed the People's Committees, the Soviets took a fairly hands-off approach to their occupation zone, allowing a coalition of nationalist and communist resistance fighters to run their own show. Within seven months, the first central government was formed, based on an interim People's Committee led by Kim Il-sung.Contrary to popular mythology, Kim wasn't handpicked by the Soviets. He enjoyed considerable prestige and support as a result of his years as a guerilla leader and his commitment to national liberation. In fact, the Soviets never completely trusted him. Eight months into the occupation, a program of land reform was begun, with landlords dispossessed of their land without compensation, but free to migrate to the south or work plots of size equal to those allocated to peasants. After a year, Kim's Workers Party became the dominant political force. Major industries, most owned by the Japanese, were nationalized. Japanese collaborators were purged from official positions. Citizens of the DPRK support Kim Il-sung because of his courageous defiance of U.S. domination, his commitment to the reunification and the real accomplishments of socialism. In the face of those who wage war for exploitation and oppression, Kim's decisions represented the aspirations of Korean workers, peasants, women and children – the united Korean nation – for freedom. Kim's support was not derived from a cult of personality or taken by force. On the contrary, he earned the support of his people in struggle. The Korean people were-and continue to be-unified in struggle and support their leaders on this basis. This support is very real. Understand this.

A survey of defectors estimates that more than half of the country they left behind approves of the job leader Kim Jong Un is doing. Seoul's Institute for Peace and Unification Studies, as reported by Yonhap news agency, asked 133 defectors to hazard a guess as to Kim's actual approval rating in the country, which at least publicly buys into the absolute cult of personality surrounding its leadership. Just over 60 percent said they think most of the country is behind him. In a similar survey in 2011, only 55 percent believed Kim's father and predecessor, Kim Jong Il, had the support of the majority of the country. As the British Broadcasting News Network (BBC) wrote:

> "Experts put Kim Jong-un's popularity down to efforts [to] improve everyday citizens' lives, with an emphasis on economic growth, light industries and farming in a country where most are believed to be short of food, Yonhap says. There are no opinion polls in the closed communist state, where — outwardly at least — the leader enjoys full and boisterous support. Though not directly comparable, the perceived approval rating outshines those of Western leaders. A recent McClatchy poll suggested only 41% of Americans back President Barack Obama's performance, while UK Prime Minister David Cameron scored 38% in a recent YouGov poll"

The Wall Street Journal, quoting the poll, says more than 81 percent of the defectors said people were getting three meals a day, up from 75 percent of the previous batch surveyed, saying:

> "It points to a successful consolidation of power for the young leader, who took over with the death of his father, Kim Jong Il, in December 2011. That seemed uncertain a year ago, at least based

on the institute's previous report on defector interviews. Speaking then with 122 people who had fled North Korea between January 2011 and May 2012, it found that 58% were unhappy with the choice of the young Mr. Kim as successor. (Of course, people who flee the country may tend to be more dissatisfied with it than people who remain.)

"The new leader seems to be tightening his grip, with 45% saying society is tightly under control, up from 36% in the previous report. Anti-regime leaflets and graffiti are a bit less common (but maybe that's the high approval rating at work): 66% of the latest group said they'd seen such things, down from 73% in the 2012 survey and 70% in 2011. Travel to other parts of the country has become more difficult. The percentage who reported having done so, after rising for five consecutive years—to 70% among the defectors interviewed in 2012, from 56% among those interviewed in 2008 — retreated to 64%"

Bourgeois media continues to portray the DPRK as a totalitarian nightmare, populated exclusively by a pacified and frightened citizenry. As I have shown, this is far from the case. The north Korean people have a far greater say in how their lives are structured than do citizens of even the most "democratic" capitalist countries. They are not forced to adhere to a Party Line handed down from on high, but rather are encouraged to participate in the running of society. The DPRK is an excellent example of socialism, which is focused on developing the working class-and humanity-to its full potential. It is only through socialism that we can realize our collective dream of a free and prosperous society. The DPRK is marching towards this dream, even in the face of unparalleled imperialist aggression. It is partly on this basis that we should pledge solidarity with the country.

Then there's the Constitution in 2013 and the one in 2016. The 2013 Constitution says that the country is place where the "ideas and leadership of the great leaders Comrade Kim Il Sung and Comrade Kim Jong Il are applied." Like the 1998 and 2009 Constitutions, it describes Kim Il Sung as the

- founder of Juche Korea

- author of the Juche idea
- organizer/leader of the “anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle,” along with other ideas stated in the 1998 and 2009 preambles,
- calls “the father of socialist Korea.”

It then calls Kim Jong Il a

- “peerless patriot and defender of socialist Korea” who strengthened and developed Juche Korea into “Kim Il Sung’s State” and developed the “immortal Juche idea and Songun id ea authored by Comrade Kim Il Sung.”

It also says that Kim Jong Il, “in the face of the collapse of the world socialist system [the USSR] and the vicious offensive of the imperialist allied forces to stifle the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea...administered Songun politics,” safeguarded previous [so-called] socialist achievements, “developed the DPRK into an invincible politico-ideological power, a nuclear state and an unchallengeable military power” and built up the nation. It goes onto say that Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il both

> *“mixed with the people, devoted their whole lives to them and turned the whole of society into a large family which is united in one mind by taking care of the people and leading them through their noble benevolent politics”*

It goes on to call both of these individuals “great leaders...sun[s] of the nation and the lodestar of national reunification” who clarified the country’s foreign policy ideals, ensured that the “international prestige of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was exalted” and served as “veteran world statesmen,” while being “geniuses of ideology and theory, masters of the leadership art, ever-victorious iron-willed brilliant commanders, great revolutionaries and statesmen, and great men.” It then says that the great ideas of “Comrade Kim Il Sung and Comrade Kim Jong Il and the great achievements made under their leadership” are lasting treasures of the Korean Revolution and will guarantees the country’s prosperity, with both buried in the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun “in their lifetime appearance” which is a “grand monument to their immortality and a symbol of the dignity and eternal sanctuary of the entire Korean nation. It ends by saying that under the WPK’s leadership, Juche Korea and the Korean people will “uphold the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung as the eternal President of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Comrade Kim Jong Il as the eternal Chairman of the National Defense Commission of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” carrying through the “revolutionary cause of Juche” by defending and carrying forward the achievements and ideas of their individuals, with the Constitution codifying “the Juche-oriented ideas” of both individuals “on State building and their exploits in it,” with the Constitution called “the Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il Constitution” in their honor. The 2016 Constitution does not seem to be changed. The preambles of the 1998, 2009, 2013, and 2016 engage in wording that bourgeois critics would likely say are signs of a “cult of personality.”

However, the achievements of Kim Il Sung, whom is called a "great leader" or even an "eternal president" (a ceremonial title) seem widespread, but are actually limited:

1. he is said to have authored the idea of Juche and applied it
2. says he led the "anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle" under the banner of Juche
3. says he founded Juche Korea, leading efforts to improve the country in the years to come, establishing "the best State and social system, the best mode of politics and system and methods of administering society, and laid solid foundations" for the prosperity of the state.
4. says he "devoted his whole life for them [the people] and turned the whole of society into a large family which is united in one mind by taking care of the people and leading them through his noble benevolent politics" (it says the same of Kim Jong Il)
5. says he is "sun of nation and the lodestar of national reunification" for his efforts on national reunification of the Korean Peninsula (it says the same of Kim Jong Il)
6. Says he clarified the basic ideals of the country's foreign policy
7. says that he was a "veteran statesman" who worked to strengthen the world peace, friendship, and supported causes of independence (it says the same of Kim Jong Il)
8. calls him a "genius in ideology and theory, a master of leadership, an ever-victorious iron-willed brilliant commander, a great revolutionary and politician and a great man" (it says the same of Kim Jong Il)

The above does not exclude the work of other individuals or the populace in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle or afterwards. In fact, it implies that he wouldn't be there without the masses, and does not say he set policy, only that he is a guiding force for future progress. That's basically it. The same is the case for Kim Jong Il, whom it calls an "eternal chairman," arguing that he is a "peerless patriot and defender of socialist Korea" who strengthened and developed Kim Il Sung'sideas, developed the "immortal Juche idea and Songun idea authored by Comrade Kim Il Sung." It also says that Kim Jong Il led the country through the years after "the collapse of the world socialist system" when he administered Songun politics," safeguarded previous so-called socialist achievements, developing "the DPRK into an invincible politico-ideological power, a nuclear state and an unchallengeable military power" and built up the nation. Saying that both Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung are "immortal" or "eternal" means that they live on, but more in their ideas than themselves as human beings. From this, one can recognize that Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il, and Kim Jong-Un are symbols, more than than anything else, of the ideology of Juche, which was informed by Marxism-Leninism if you go back in earlier constitutions of the country. Furthermore, if you look at the horrid Wikipedia page titled "List of leaders of North Korea" it is clear that Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il, and Kim Jong-Un were military commandaers (all three were Supreme Commanders of the KPA) but even more than that, all of them were party leaders, leading party organs like the Central Military Commission of the WPK as a Chairman or the Central Committee of the WPK as a Chairman (1949-1966, 2016-Present), General Secretary (1996-2011), or First Secretary (2012-2016). From 1972 to 1994, Kim Il Sung was the President of Juche Korea, but when he died in 1994, Kim Jong Il did not replace him as Kim Il Sung stayed as "eternal president." After that point, Yang Hyong-sop was President of the SPA's Presidium (1994-1998) and Kim Yong-nam, who has been the President since 1998. Even saying this, not only was Kim Tu-bong chairman of the WPK from 1946 to 1949, not a member of this "Kim family" but the Premiers of the Administration Council from 1972 to 1998 and Premiers of the Cabinet from 1998 to Present have not been either Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il or Kim Jong Un, but rather other dedicated Korean comrades. If that isn't enough, consider that the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly, from 1948 to 1998, and the Chairman of the SPA, has never been held by any of the "three Kims" (Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il or Kim Jong Un).

As noted before, the DPRK's constitution was also updated twice in 2019, but changed none of what he just discussed above.

To say again, the "three Kims," as I'll call them here, are symbols more than anything. Sure, they can eliminate economic bureaucrats as Kim Jong Il [did in 1998](), but they do not have any power when it comes to Constitutional revisions, including the one in 1998 when removed the position of President, called Kim Il Sung "Eternal President," reduced the amount of ownership while those of "private ownership...[and] those of social and cooperative organizations" were expanded, citizens freedom of travel is established, strengthens "individual economic entities," and created the ground for creating a special economic zone."The same goes for Kim Jong Un and his New Year's address, with mass rallies, arguing that "the DPRK will continue down the line of "Byungjin," the parallel "development of nuclear weapons and national economy as long as the nuclear threat posed by imperialists continues," and declared that the county is a nuclear weapons state," in [January 2016 for example](). Some may still be throwing up their hands, saying the analysis so far is flawed. They may point out that Kim Il Sung, born near Pyongyang in Mangyondae, joined the "Korean guerrilla resistance against the Japanese occupation in the 1930s," after he was expelled from middle school for such activities, claim he was part of the Soviet army during WWII and was "installed" by the Soviets, talk about his children and wives and say that he fashioned the national ideology of "juche" or "patriotic self-reliance" (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "Kim Il Sung," March 7, 2012; "North Korea's secretive 'first family'," BBC News, Dec 13, 2013; "Kim Family," NK Leadership Watch, last updated in 2009.; TIME Photo and Charlie Campbell, "The Despotic Dynasty: A Family Tree of North Korea's Kim Clan, " Time, Feb 24, 2017; Christopher Richardson, "North Korea's Kim dynasty: the making of a personality cult," The Guardian, Feb 16, 2015; Ian Buruma, "North Korea's Kim dynasty a hodgepodge of influences," Asia Times, Oct 21, 2017; Anthea Batsakis, "North Korea family tree: Who are the major players in the Kim Dynasty?," Herald Sun, Sept 5, 2017; Deutsche Welle, "The truth and myths of the Kim dynasty," Sept 3, 2017; Bertil Lintner, "North Korea: Myth Making, Dynastic Lies And Secrets," Asia Pacific Media Services Limited (reprinted from Far Eastern Economic Review, July 10, 2003), accessed Feb 12, 2018; "Kim-Possible: The Final Days of the Kim Dynasty in Pyongyang," Oct 13, 2014). They may further declare that the Juche calendar "inaugurated in 1997, recalculated time from the year Kim Il-sung was said to have come to earth from heaven in 1912" (it didn't "recalculate time" because publications of the DPRK use the Georgian calendar and the Juche calendar together!). Furthermore, these individuals may say the same about Kim Jong Il, the son of Kim Il Sung, scowling at the idea that he was "born on Mount Paektu in a guerrilla base camp," "raised by his mother and other women guerrillas," says he supposedly had multiple wives, and was an "obsessive film buff" who had a "collection of more than 20,000 video tapes," authoring a staggering number of books while he was at Kim Il Song University. [21] Finally, they may say that Kim Jong-Un, whose father was Kim Jong Il, with a brother named Kim Jong Chul, works "in the WKP propaganda department," married Ri Sol-Ju in 2009 or 2010 and had a daughter named Ju-ae in 2012, that he "studied in Switzerland" with schoolmates describing him as a "good friend and very quiet, nice guy" with "childhood hagiography" and support of his government formalized by China after Kim Jong Il's death in 2011 ("Kim Family," NK Leadership Watch, last updated in 2009; The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "Kim Jong Il," 2013; TIME Photo and Charlie Campbell, "The Despotic Dynasty: A Family Tree of North Korea's Kim Clan, " Time, Feb 24, 2017; "15 strange "facts" about the Kim dynasty," MSN, Apr 22, 2015;"North Korea's secretive 'first family'," BBC News, Dec 13, 2013). Even if you say all of the above is true, it doesn't many any of the "three Kims"gods or dieties. It makes them leaders, sure, but in terms of their actual governmental power, they are basically figureheads and symbols representing Juche (and more recently Songun). But, you could say that their responsibilities have increased over the years. This is obviously a way to make sure the State and social system doesn't collapse due to imperialist attack. After all, as bourgeois media has stated (Foster Klug, "NKorea explodes myth of unchallenged Kim dynasty," Associated Press, Dec 16, 2013; Maria Perez, "North Korea's Kim Jong Un Worried About Uprising, Orders Protection for Depictions of Himself," Newsweek, Oct 27, 2017; Julian Ryall, "North Korea's Kim dynasty survived 'series of coups', says CIA agent," The Telegraph, May 8, 2015; "N Korea defector: Kim Jong-un's days are numbered," Al Jazeera, Jan 25, 2017; Alex Lockie, "North Korea cracks down on dissidents with 'little respect' for Kim Jong Un — and it could be his undoing," Business Insider, Oct 26, 2017; Charlie Campbell, "Kim Jong Nam's Murder Likely Means Dangerous Times Ahead for Members of North Korea's Ruling Family," Time, Mar 7, 2017):

- the CIA attempted failed coups in 1991 and 1995, in both cases working with a "faction in the military...behind the uprising" as asserted by former CIA operative who had been stationed in the Korean Peninsula
- there have been plans to set up a "government-in-exile" with defectors, especially with members of Kim family to "delegitimize" the government, with "connected" claims the government is "collapsing"!
- there have been supposed efforts "closely monitor monuments and paintings" of the country from vandalism and what they claim are "purges" (whether this is true or not, it could indicate elements trying to bring down the social system)

As a last ditch attempt, they may claim there is a "Mount Baekdu bloodline" of the Kim family in Juche Korea, based on a claim in a ROK newspaper. If you look at the horrid Wikipedia page titled "Kim dyansty (North Korea)" who find sources that mainly rely in Orientalist bourgeois media. One of those sources reprints the 1974 "Ten Principles for the Establishment of the One-Ideology System," announced by Kim Il Sung that year but proposed by Kim Young Joo in 1967:

1. We must give our all in the struggle to unify the entire society with the revolutionary ideology of the Great Leader Kim Il Sung.

2. We must honor the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung with all our loyalty.

3. We must make absolute the authority of the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung.

4. We must make the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung[‘s] revolutionary ideology our faith and make his instructions our creed.

5. We must adhere strictly to the principle of unconditional obedience in carrying out the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung’s instructions.

6. We must strengthen the entire partys ideology and willpower and revolutionary unity, centering on the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung.

7. We must learn from the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung and adopt the communist look, revolutionary work methods and people-oriented work style.

8. We must value the political life we were given by the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung, and loyally repay his great political trust and thoughtfulness with heightened political awareness and skill.

9. We must establish strong organizational regulations so that the entire party, nation and military move as one under the one and only leadership of the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung.

10.We must pass down the great achievement of the revolution by the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung from generation to generation, inheriting and completing it to the end.

Honoring and supporting his ideology is not worship. Making the authority of Kim Il Sung “absolute” (meaning perfect, complete, whole or definite) does not mean it is all-encompassing. Making his ideology “our faith and make his instructions our creed” may sound like worship, but it actually just means they will follow his guidance. The same goes for the "unconditional obedience in carrying out the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung's instructions" as he is a symbol and guiding force, as I noted earlier. The strengthening of party ideology, "willpower and revolutionary unity, centering on the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung" is understandable because Kim Il Sung was the party leader! Getting to point 7, learning from Kim Il Sung, and adopting "the communist look, revolutionary work methods and people-oriented work style" is a move toward helping the masses. With the valuing of political life "given by the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung and working to "repay his great political trust and thoughtfulness" with their "heightened political awareness and skill" means they are honoring his accomplishments. The establishment of "strong organizational regulations so that the entire party, nation and military move" as one under the "one and only leadership of the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung" basically says that there should be political unity and society, with everyone working together for a common goal. Finally, passing down "the great achievement of the revolution by the Great Leader comrade Kim Il Sung from generation to generation, inheriting and completing it to the end" means that the social achievements and gains so far under Kim Il Sung as a leader/guiding force, is an important goal for social construction going forward, without question. If what the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom said, in November 2005, is right, that "Thank you, Father Kim Il Sung" is the "first phrase North Korean parents are instructed to teach to their children" it means that those in the population are remembering and honoring their past, with Kim Il Sung as an embodiment of that past. The expanded version, "[Ten Great Principles of the Establishment of the Unitary Ideology System]" is similar, honoring Kim Il Sung (ex: saying he is a "legendary hero" for which he is for leading the struggle to free the Korean people from brutal Japanese colonialism), while saying there should be unified ideology, a stronger party, and protect Kim Il Sung from attacks from revisionists. Some may say that the following words are are a manifestation of the "cult of personality" or "cult of the individual":

"Respectfully worship our beloved Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's sculptures, plaster casts, bronze statues, badges with portraits, art developed by the Great Leader, board with Great Leader's instructions, basic mottos of the Party...Respectfully manage and thoroughly protect the records and sites of revolutionary struggle and the revolutionary history of our Beloved Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung and the Party's Unitary Ideology stronghold Museum of the Revolutionary Activities of Comrade Kim Il Sung and the Research Institute of Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's Revolutionary Thought...Our Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's revolutionary thought and Juche ideology must be realized through our united belief and must be experienced in the flesh and bones of every person...Unconditionally accept, treat as a non-negotiable condition, and decide everything based upon our Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's instructions and in every act think only about the greatness of our Leader...Systematically and fully master the Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's laborious works, guidelines and his splendid revolutionary history...Participate without absence in more than 2 hours of study groups, lectures and collective studies devoted to revolutionary ideas of Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung...The system of delivering the Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's guidelines must be thoroughly studied, and the Leader's instructions and Party goals have to be communicated exactly...There must be a strict distinction between the Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's guidelines and individual party executives instructions and it must be investigated if individual official's instructions are matching the Leader's ones...Fight with all one's will against anti-Party and anti-revolutionary thinking trends that have its origin in capitalistic ideas, feudal Confucian ideas, revisionism, dogmatism, toadyism and are contrary to the revolutionary thought of the Great Leader KIM Il Sung...Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's instructions must be viewed

as a legal and supreme order and unconditionally realized without excuses or trivial reasons...Regard as a holy duty and supreme glory reducing the concerns of our Beloved Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung and fight for it with complete dedication...Fight against those who accept our Beloved Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's instructions only in letter and sabotage the implementation...At all localities and all guard posts, strengthen the solidarity of the ideological intellect of the columns through revolutionary struggle based on loyalty to the Great Leader...Resolutely struggle in opposition to anti-Party elements such as factionalism, regionalism, and nepotism that could destroy the uniform solidarity of the Party and never waver at the slightest hint of such menace to completely overcome it...Oppose senility and stagnation, indolence and slackening and remain awash with a flourishing fighting spirit and passion to always work militantly, and reject passivity and conservative tendencies and embark in all undertakings boldly and grandly...Consider political life as the first life, never bend one's political beliefs and revolutionary integrity. Learn to throw away like bits of straw, one's physical life for political life...Consciously participate in organizational life to standardize and normalize the undertakings and said life...Establish a strong revolutionary order and rules that organize and advance all undertakings according to the Leader's sole leadership system and handle policy questions solely through the teachings of the Great Leader and the conclusion of the Party...Accurately execute the decisions and orders of the Party and State to carry through the teachings of the Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung...Oppose and actively struggle against all kinds of behaviors by individual cadre which go against the principles such as the individual abuse of power or authority...Oppose and sharply struggle against the situation of leaking Party, State and military secrets...Do not connive towards the slightest phenomenon or element that depart from the Party's sole leadership system, to the contrary, struggle against it."

Some of the above can easily be interpreted as saying that the ideology of Juche should affect all Koreans positively. It also says that these party cadres should be following Kim Il Sung's advice for moving forward, which would make sense as he was the party leader of the WPK at the time and these principles were circulated around the party itself! The same can be said for the study of his work or efforts to make sure there is ideological unity and ideological loyalty rather than ideological discord, as it is part of engaging "in the execution of the revolutionary task" and displaying "high political fervor" and elevating "the level of political theory and technical administration," carrying through Kim Il Sung's teachings. You could say that Kim Il Sung, or later Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un were inspirational forces to such party cadres, as much as Huey Newton inspired Black Panthers. The last tenet says that:

> *"All Party members and workers may become like the Great Leader KIM Il Sung by firmly establishing the Party's unitary ideology system and must complete the revolutionary accomplishment to the end, following the path pointed by the Great Leader"*

This means that the "three Kims" are an inspiration and guide to follow, something to aspire to, meaning that they don't "stand above" the masses, and you could even say, are part of the masses. Some may use their eagle eyes focusing on the phrase that party cadres should "respectfully worship our beloved Great Leader Comrade KIM Il Sung's sculptures, plaster casts, bronze statues, badges with portraits, art developed by the Great Leader, board with Great Leader's instructions, basic mottos of the Party." This should be approached carefully. Let us remember, as noted earlier, worship can mean a "reverence or devotion" for someone. Importantly, reverence, a word that is similar to devotion, a synonym of honor. As noted by the 2nd Edition of Roget's Super Thesaurus by Marc McCutcheon, the word honor also has a number of other synonyms:

- respect
- esteem
- admiration
- veneration
- dignity
- glory
- deference's
- homage
- exaltation
- recognition
- approval

Taking what is above into account, it means that when they say "respectfully worship" they are talking about recognition, deference, respect, and honor, more than "worshipping" any of the "three Kims" as gods. Furthermore, when one translates the English word "worship" to Korean, they get 경배하되 on one online translator, but if you translate it back, it is "the worship." Other sites say it is 숭배. Most informative of all is Google Translate. It says the word worship is 예배 in Korean, but also says that it can be a verb, meaning, "adore, worship, praise" or which is 숭배하다 in Korean. From this, you could say that they are saying that the "sculptures, plaster casts, bronze statues, badges with portraits, art developed by the Great Leader, board with Great Leader's instructions, basic mottos of the Party" should be praised, as someof these can't be "worshipped" or "adored" since they aren't trying to make Juche a religion but rather solidify it as an ideology. This is part of the reason that "access to independent news sources is extremely limited...[that] some schools and state institutions have access to a tightly controlled intranet called Kwangmyong" if what the CPJ (Committee to Protect Journalists) can be believed, because such access would lead to ideological poisoning. You could also say that the English translation of the document by an anti-Juche Korea group, a "human rights" group, could be off, so they may have translated the Korean word for "worship" as it served their purposes doing so. With all of this, we can say that, respectfully, Enver Hoxha was wrong. Considering that the DPRK did not ultimately side with China or the Soviets, instead willing to trade with both and non-aligned countries, this likely angered those like Hoxha. In the end, Hoxha failed in his attempt of anti-revisionism with the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, which had existed from 1946, continued after his death in 1985 but the following ruler, Ramiz Alia began to adopt revisionist policies with the Communists voted out in elections in 1992 and a new Constitution ratified in 1998 which abolished the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, creating a bourgeois "representative" system.

Finally, this brings us to what Andrei Lankov wrote. He writes that those in the DPRK (he is specifically talking about the "three Kims") are not "irrational" but are rather "the ultimate political survivors, hard-edged rationalists" who laughed at by those in the Eastern Bloc who were reportedly "mocked for clinging to their outdated personality cult and failed economics"

(Andrei Lankov, “North Korea explained: The Kim dynasty has learned the lessons of history,” Financial Review, Apr 27, 2017). Yet the country stayed together (unlike the Eastern Bloc countries who had fully accepted revisionism by then), taking lessons from the bloody overthrow of Gaddafi in 2011 to have a defensive nuclear program, seeing nuclear weapons as a “major guarantee of their security” especially since they remember, perhaps vividly that “back in 1956 China, together with Russia, supported a failed conspiracy aimed at removing Kim Il-sung, the current supreme leader’s grandfather, from power.” While Lankov calls for expanding “the sources of information available to the North Korean public” so as to expose them to capitalist thinking (which is what he truly wants), he concluded by writing “the Kim family might be rational, but so are the North Koreans themselves.” This is often not understood when people talk about the DPRK. There is no “autocracy” or “personality cult” in the DPRK - the country is undoubtedly something we should celebrate for its accomplishments, while remaining critical of the contradictions the State has introduced since 1991, like special enterprise zones, which could bring in reactionary thoughts and conceptions, and other elements of revisionism to say the least.

A democracy is a society in which the majority of the people has the ability to make decisions about their political and social life. My use of the dictionary here is not meant to imply that dictionaries are the supreme authority on definitions. I make use of it simply to avoid accusations that my definition of democracy is ideological. I have not invented a definition of democracy that includes the DPRK because I want to force you to consider it democratic. I have taken dozens of mainstream sources whose political agenda is the polar opposite of mine and proved the opposite of what they've said. As we've established before, candidates are chosen in mass meetings held under the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland, which also organizes the political parties in the DPRK. Citizens run under these parties or they (can) run as independents. They are chosen by the people, not by the “party” (in fact, the parliament in the DPRK consists of three separate parties as of last election, the Workers Party of Korea, the Korean Social Democratic Party, and the Chondoist Chongu Party). But what we still have yet to address is the [intentional] Western understanding of why party ballots have only one candidate on them. The fact that there is only one candidate on the ballot is because there has already been a consensus reached on who should be up for nomination for that position, by the people in their mass meetings. People vote in a separate room from anyone else and are afforded privacy. The mass meetings require input from the popular masses, so they are not secret, nor should they be, since this would impede the democratic process and make it more difficult for the deputies to directly address the needs and demands of the people. They are more than votes and ballots, they are meetings where the people are given a voice and the power to impact their political system in a meaningful way. This is a truly democratic arrangement, as it places power directly in the hands of the people rather than in the hands of wealthy “representatives” who have no idea how the majority actually live. According to one report, the median income of a member of the United States congress is 14 times that of the average citizen (https://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2014/01/09/let-them-eat-cake-members-of-congress-14-times-more-wealthy-than-average-american)!

It is simply impossible for them to understand the struggle of the masses. In the DPRK, by contrast, the masses advocate for themselves directly. They understand their own interests and are able to advance them openly. This is what real democracy entails. The Central Electoral Committee is composed of several members of the SPA, WPK, and Presidium. It is formed by a vote of the Presidium - and this is why, out of every "AES" country, not only is the DPRK the oldest; it's also the most stable. Here, we see the profound difference in DPRK elections and American elections. American elections are designed merely to give the illusion of popular participation in government. Citizens are given a choice, effectively, between two candidates who both represent the interests of big business. It is virtually impossible to break out of the two-party system, unless one is independently wealthy. Ross Perot, for example, was only able to run against billionaires because of his status as a billionaire (http://mashable.com/2015/08/06/trump-richest-candidates/).

He was only able to break out of the two-party system imposed by corporate capitalism because he himself embodied corporate capitalism. Time and again, we see that it is the candidate with the most money who wins elections in the United States. In the making of policy, it is monied interest groups who get what they want, not ordinary working class people. Despite the veneer of democracy that the US has adopted, it is in fact a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. There is no genuine alternative to the interests of capital (which are in reality the interests of a minority of business owners), and thus no real democracy. In the DPRK, however, democracy flourishes. As we have seen, they are designed with the explicit goal to empower the popular masses. The no-vote is a direct result of this.It is not evidence of the monopolization of power into the hands of the Party but rather evidence of the power of the people. No-votes arise when the discussions of the masses become too contentious. In a certain sense, the masses sometimes have too much power. The elections exist to mediate this and come to truly democratic conclusions, where the will of the majority is enacted. The elections are not a barrier to democracy, but rather an expression of it. Citizens in capitalist countries are typically only made aware of one aspect of the election process in the DPRK. They are led to believe that only one candidate ever appears on the ballot, and this is used to paint the DPRK as dictatorial. The same method of selective reporting could be used to misrepresent Western ‘democratic’ systems. If the media only covered the electoral college during an American election, for example, they could easily assert that just 538 Americans were allowed to vote for president. This reveals the importance of rigorous research regarding the DPRK. While there may be elements of truth to Western reporting on the DPRK, they never reveal the whole picture. It is vital that we strike out on our own and refuse to trust the bourgeois media in the United States. Elections, though, are not the only marker by which democracy is determined. The United States has elections, but I have just argued that it is undemocratic. This must mean that arenas beyond parliament (or similar bodies) also play a role in determining whether or not a country is democratic. In my view, an important area to consider when talking about democracy is the economy. It is the economy which determines whether or not we stay alive, let alone what political forms we adopt. It is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world and by employing real means, that slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule and spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and that, in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. “Liberation” is an historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, and the conditions of both intercourse and productivity. The execution of general strategic plans, however, is conditioned by people's concrete action. The plan is a mental abstraction that is not the product of general economic and social forces but of the stage of development of those forces at a given moment. It is in the performance of the concrete actions of individuals, groups and societies that the concrete relations between people take place. The state, in the Marxian sense, unites all the antagonistic interests of a given people into one common whole, divided between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, owners and not-owners and exploiters and exploited. But simultaneously, the state, in the Leninist sense, acts as the supreme organ of democracy for its historical process; without it men's material and ideal interests would be permanently at a deadlock, tied to a series of looping ages, in which their historical life would become directly dependent on that of some other people or bourgeois state. The State is the political form of the social process which, in its highest phase, develops the material life and development of the masses, develops, regulates and organizes them for the attainment of their material and ideal needs, and whose function, on the other hand, is to transform these social needs into forms of action before it's eventual "withering away" or abolition. But for that, it must be equipped with all the instruments and tools of control necessary to ensure that it never overtakes the people in their individual and collective movement and interest, so that by the end of their historical existence, the people, with their leader, become just as clear as possible to themselves and others as to their own true interests. If a small minority of individuals controls the economy, then it follows that the same group has the final say in the politics, art, and culture of a particular society. This can be seen in the United States. A minority of the population is made up of wealthy business owners, who exercise a huge amount of control over policy. They only hold this political power because they have money. It is therefore the case that the primary center of power in society is the economy. Societies can only be considered democratic if the masses of people manage the economy as well as the political sphere. This can never be the case under capitalism.

But beyond voting, there is even more to analyze. Workplaces in the DPRK are managed according to the Tean Work System, which is described this way by Country Data:

> “The highest managerial authority under the Taean system is the party committee. Each committee consists of approximately twenty-five to thirty-five members elected from the ranks of managers, workers, engineers, and the leadership of working people’s organizations at the factory. A smaller “executive committee,” about one-fourth the size of the regular committee, has practical responsibility for day-to-day plant operations and major factory decisions. The most important staff members, including the party committee secretary, factory manager, and chief engineer, make up its membership. The system focuses on cooperation among workers, technicians, and party functionaries at the factory level”

This system has persisted long in the DPRK. In his New Year’s address at the thirtieth anniversary of the Taean Work System, Kim Il-Sung said:

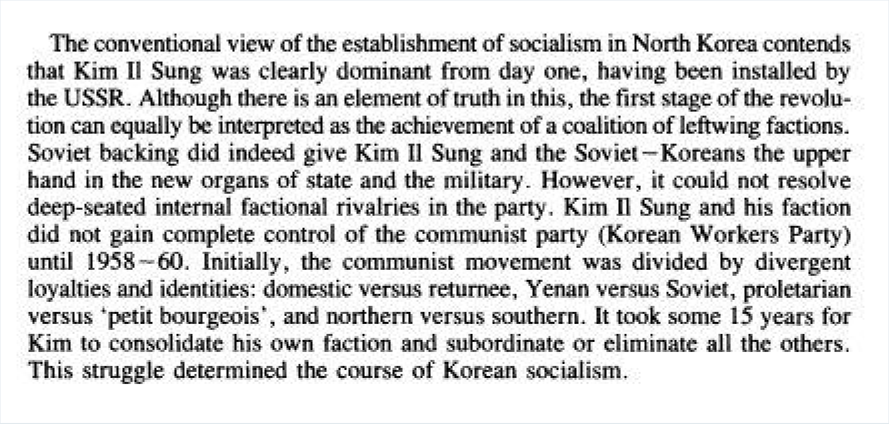
"[The] Taean work system is the best system of economic management. It enables the producer masses to fulfill their responsibility and role as masters and to manage the economy in a scientific and rational manner by implementing the mass line in economic management, and by combining party leadership organically with administrative, economic, and technical guidance"

Though it should be noted that "the Taean work system of economic management" was replaced with "the socialist system of responsible business operation" in 2019 but there has not been a sufficient release of information to know if this “socialist system of responsible business operation” preserves the fundamentals of the taean work system, if it’s a reform to it, or if it’s something completely new altogether. Still though, this remains a cause for concern for anti-revisionists abroad, especially given the DPRK’s iffy history in the past.

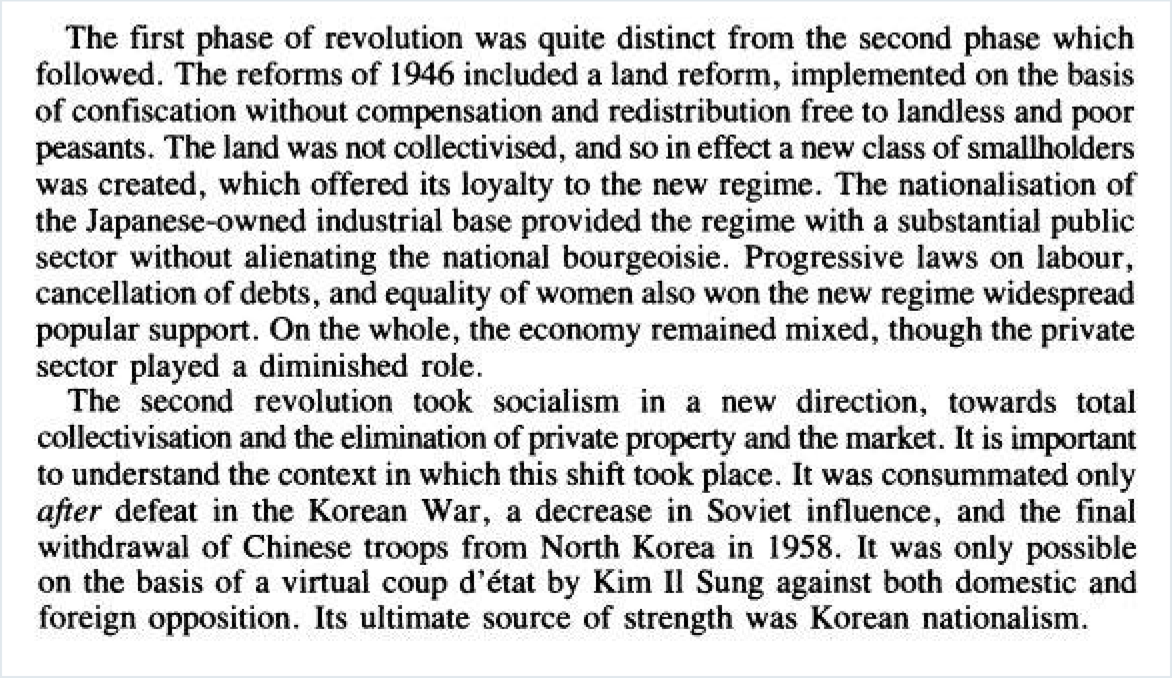
Conclusions:

Korean socialism achieved an impressive standard of living for the Korean people prior to the collapse of its largest trading partner, the USSR, in 1991. Marxist-Leninists must study the shortcomings of Democratic Korea, but they must also enthusiastically praise the outstanding gains accomplished by the Korean revolution. As Bruce Cumings, Professor of Korean History at the University of Chicago, points out in his 2003 book, North Korea: Another Country, “Modern Korea emerged from one of the most class-divided and stratified societies on the face of the earth, almost castelike in its hereditary hierarchy.” Cumings even notes that slavery encompassed anywhere from 60-90 percent of society until its abolition in 1894, in which most slaves were converted into feudal peasants ruled by Korean, and eventually Japanese, overlords. Cumings cites US security reports on the situation in revolutionary Korea to prove that “For those defined as poor and middle peasants, not only did their lives improve but they became the favored class.” The WPK’s commitment to bottom-up socialist revolution was reflected in their class composition at the time of its founding, in which “laborers constituted 20 percent of the membership, poor peasants 50 percent, and samuwon [white-collar workers] 14 percent.” As independent scholar Stephen Gowans points out in his 2006 article, “Understanding North Korea,” Democratic Korea enjoyed a comparable standard of living to their neighbors in the south well into the 1980s. Living spartan lifestyles, the Korean people were nearly self-sufficient in terms of light industry and consumer goods by 1967, with goods like textiles, underwear, socks, shoes, and alcoholic beverages becoming increasingly available for every citizen. Heavy industry, however, remained “the backbone of the economy,” in the words of Brun. She notes that “although assistance from socialist bloc countries may have been substantial at the beginning of the rehabilitation period, a few years later – after the record year of 1954 – this foreign aid began to decrease and North Korea gradually had to become self-supporting.” Because of trade politics brought on by the Sino-Soviet split, the DPRK gradually lost some of the aid it received from the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, they managed to develop their heavy industry substantially, progressing 51.7% in industrial output from 1953-1955. Korean socialism suffered tremendous setbacks in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union and most of the socialist bloc. Resilient as ever, the nation persevered through these difficult years despite facing famine, heinous weather conditions, and blocked access to international trade by Western imperialist powers. Often a point of criticism from left-communists, Trotskyites, and anticommunists, collectivization in the DPRK did not result in any famine or mass starvation. In fact, “at no time during cooperativization did the agricultural output decrease; on the contrary, the process was accompanied by a steady increase in production.” Citing statistics of food production, Brun shows a sharp increase from about 2.9 million tons in 1956 to 3.8 million tons in 1960. (Stemming from Democratic Korea’s push for self-sufficiency, the WPK put the nation on a path to increase its food production steadily and feed the entire country. Local people’s committees, in which any Korean worker could participate, elected leadership to guide agricultural production and collaborated with national authorities to coordinate nation-wide efficiency. These people’s committees were the primary means by which “the Party remains in contact with the masses on the various collective farms, thus enabling it to gauge public opinion on issues affecting the policies of the country people’s committee.” In 1966, the WPK introduced the “group management system,” which “organized groups of ten to twenty-five farmers into production units, each of which was then put permanently in charge of a certain area of land, a certain task, or a certain instrument of production.” This represents another instrument of people’s democracy implemented in Korean socialist production. Despite its challenges and shortcomings, Democratic Korea is one of the last remaining countries where workers were able to control society collectively as a class. As one of the socialist countries to survive the fall of the USSR, Marxist-Leninists must study and learn from the resilience of the Korean people.

So, to better help our readers here better understand how enterprise works at an enterprise or firm level, (which is important to know since firms are affected/affect political structures across any system) let us recall that the people's committees in the south were crushed by the US Army, while in the north this system was maintained, eventually growing into the state we now know as the DPRK. But the system developed even more after the Korean War, which I won't be going into detail about here.



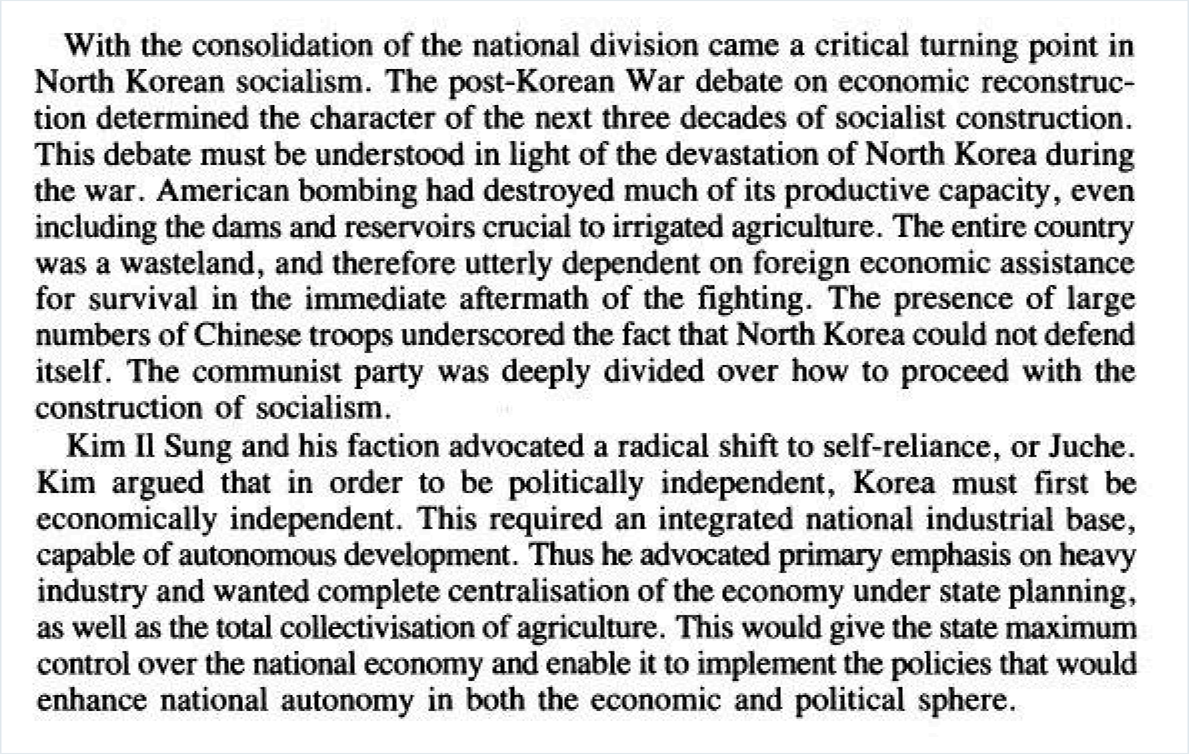
The conventional view of the establishment of socialism in North Korea contends that Kim Il Sung was clearly dominant from day one, having been installed by the USSR. Although there is an element of truth in this, the first stage of the revolution can equally be interpreted as the achievement of a coalition of leftwing factions. Soviet backing did indeed give Kim Il Sung and the Soviet–Koreans the upper hand in the new organs of state and the military. However, it could not resolve deep-seated internal factional rivalries in the party. Kim Il Sung and his faction did not gain complete control of the communist party (Korean Workers Party) until 1958–60. Initially, the communist movement was divided by divergent loyalties and identities: domestic versus returnee, Yenan versus Soviet, proletarian versus ‘petit bourgeois’, and northern versus southern. It took some 15 years for Kim to consolidate his own faction and subordinate or eliminate all the others. This struggle determined the course of Korean socialism.



The first phase of revolution was quite distinct from the second phase which followed. The reforms of 1946 included a land reform, implemented on the basis of confiscation without compensation and redistribution free to landless and poor peasants. The land was not collectivised, and so in effect a new class of smallholders was created, which offered its loyalty to the new regime. The nationalisation of the Japanese-owned industrial base provided the regime with a substantial public sector without alienating the national bourgeoisie. Progressive laws on labour, cancellation of debts, and equality of women also won the new regime widespread popular support. On the whole, the economy remained mixed, though the private sector played a diminished role.

The second revolution took socialism in a new direction, towards total collectivisation and the elimination of private property and the market. It is important to understand the context in which this shift took place. It was consummated only *after* defeat in the Korean War, a decrease in Soviet influence, and the final withdrawal of Chinese troops from North Korea in 1958. It was only possible on the basis of a virtual coup d'état by Kim Il Sung against both domestic and foreign opposition. Its ultimate source of strength was Korean nationalism.

So, in this "second revolution" we see a radical turn to self-reliance and a building up of socialism in the north, after a devastating stalemate which left much of the country in ruins.

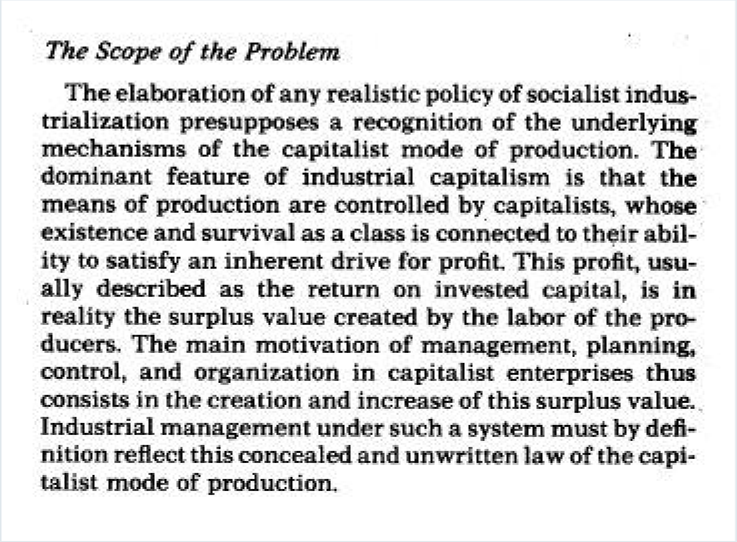


With the consolidation of the national division came a critical turning point in North Korean socialism. The post-Korean War debate on economic reconstruction determined the character of the next three decades of socialist construction. This debate must be understood in light of the devastation of North Korea during the war. American bombing had destroyed much of its productive capacity, even including the dams and reservoirs crucial to irrigated agriculture. The entire country was a wasteland, and therefore utterly dependent on foreign economic assistance for survival in the immediate aftermath of the fighting. The presence of large numbers of Chinese troops underscored the fact that North Korea could not defend itself. The communist party was deeply divided over how to proceed with the construction of socialism.

Kim Il Sung and his faction advocated a radical shift to self-reliance, or Juche. Kim argued that in order to be politically independent, Korea must first be economically independent. This required an integrated national industrial base, capable of autonomous development. Thus he advocated primary emphasis on heavy industry and wanted complete centralisation of the economy under state planning, as well as the total collectivisation of agriculture. This would give the state maximum control over the national economy and enable it to implement the policies that would enhance national autonomy in both the economic and political sphere.

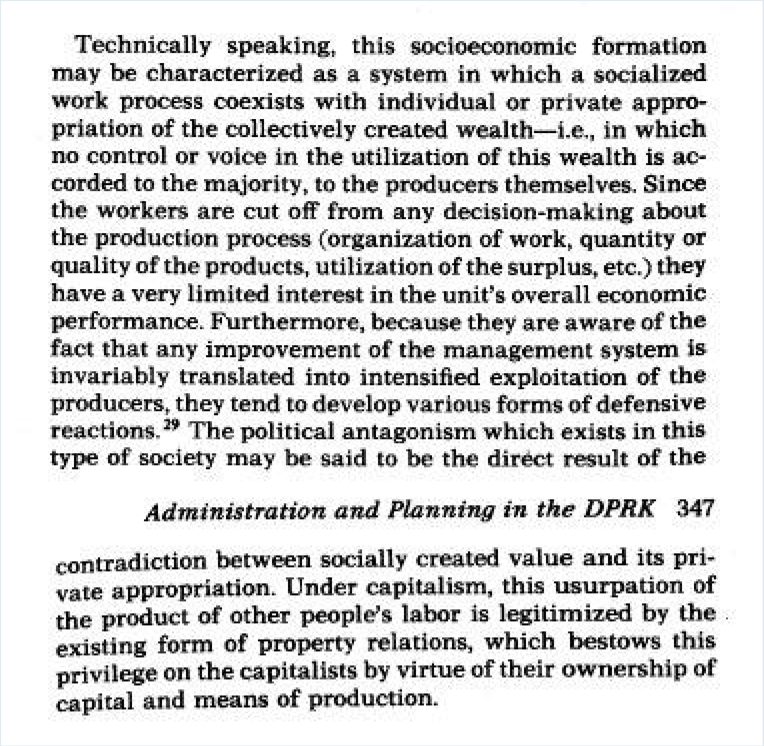
This meant the system of management at the firm level was, at first, highly centralized. A bonus system existed, much like in the Soviet Union. But great power was vested in the role of the director. Change was sorely needed to boost productivity and morale.

If we're to think about how we'd like to see a firm operate under socialism, we must think about the ghosts of our previous system, haunting us and weighing down our progress. They must be exorcized — no easy task.



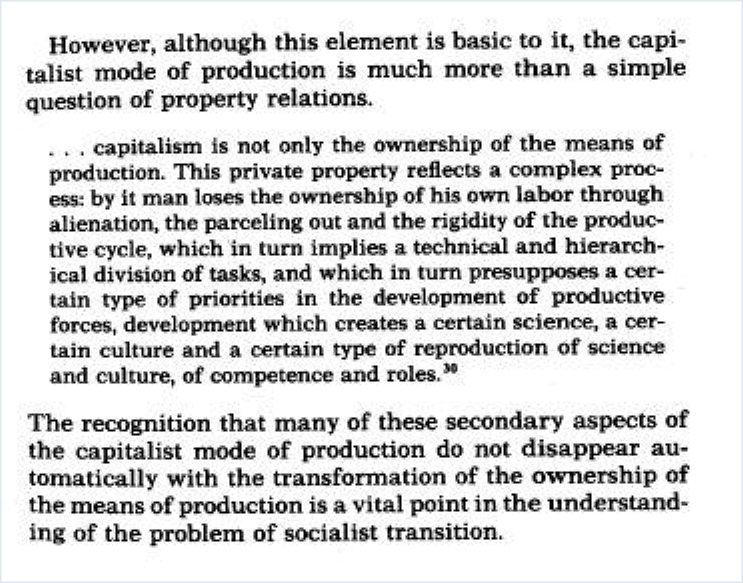
The Scope of the Problem

The elaboration of any realistic policy of socialist industrialization presupposes a recognition of the underlying mechanisms of the capitalist mode of production. The dominant feature of industrial capitalism is that the means of production are controlled by capitalists, whose existence and survival as a class is connected to their ability to satisfy an inherent drive for profit. This profit, usually described as the return on invested capital, is in reality the surplus value created by the labor of the producers. The main motivation of management, planning, control, and organization in capitalist enterprises thus consists in the creation and increase of this surplus value. Industrial management under such a system must by definition reflect this concealed and unwritten law of the capitalist mode of production.



Technically speaking, this socioeconomic formation may be characterized as a system in which a socialized work process coexists with individual or private appropriation of the collectively created wealth—i.e., in which no control or voice in the utilization of this wealth is accorded to the majority, to the producers themselves. Since the workers are cut off from any decision-making about the production process (organization of work, quantity or quality of the products, utilization of the surplus, etc.) they have a very limited interest in the unit's overall economic performance. Furthermore, because they are aware of the fact that any improvement of the management system is invariably translated into intensified exploitation of the producers, they tend to develop various forms of defensive reactions.[29] The political antagonism which exists in this type of society may be said to be the direct result of the

contradiction between socially created value and its private appropriation. Under capitalism, this usurpation of the product of other people's labor is legitimized by the existing form of property relations, which bestows this privilege on the capitalists by virtue of their ownership of capital and means of production.

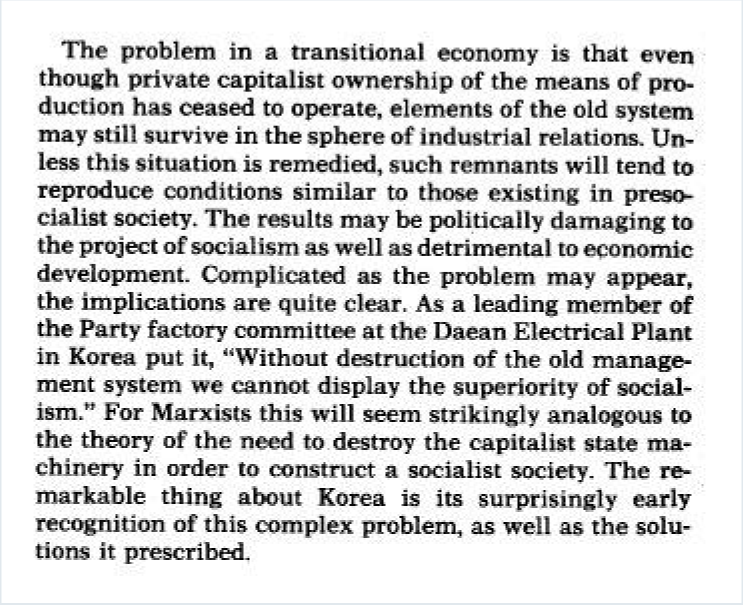


However, although this element is basic to it, the capitalist mode of production is much more than a simple question of property relations.

> . . . capitalism is not only the ownership of the means of production. This private property reflects a complex process: by it man loses the ownership of his own labor through alienation, the parceling out and the rigidity of the productive cycle, which in turn implies a technical and hierarchical division of tasks, and which in turn presupposes a certain type of priorities in the development of productive forces, development which creates a certain science, a certain culture and a certain type of reproduction of science and culture, of competence and roles.[30]

The recognition that many of these secondary aspects of the capitalist mode of production do not disappear automatically with the transformation of the ownership of the means of production is a vital point in the understanding of the problem of socialist transition.

This was a problem the Koreans were all too aware of.

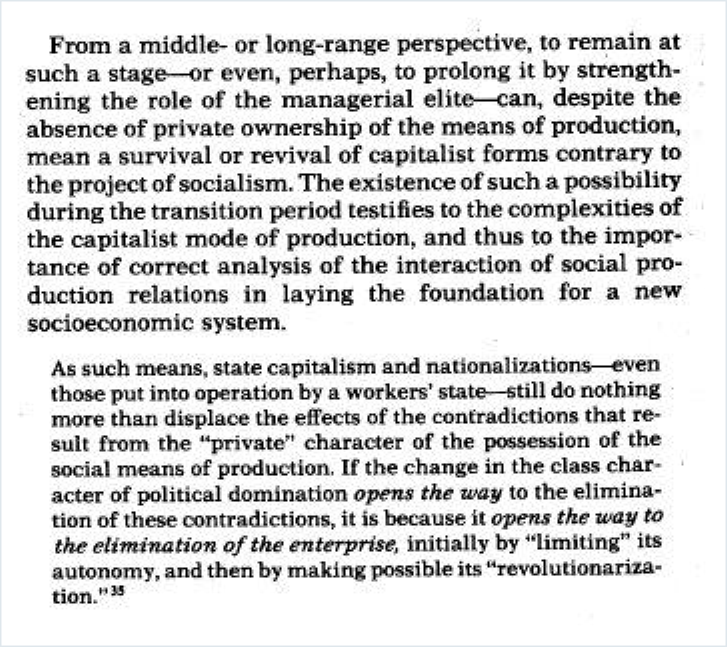


The problem in a transitional economy is that even though private capitalist ownership of the means of production has ceased to operate, elements of the old system may still survive in the sphere of industrial relations. Unless this situation is remedied, such remnants will tend to reproduce conditions similar to those existing in presocialist society. The results may be politically damaging to the project of socialism as well as detrimental to economic development. Complicated as the problem may appear, the implications are quite clear. As a leading member of the Party factory committee at the Daean Electrical Plant in Korea put it, "Without destruction of the old management system we cannot display the superiority of socialism." For Marxists this will seem strikingly analogous to the theory of the need to destroy the capitalist state machinery in order to construct a socialist society. The remarkable thing about Korea is its surprisingly early recognition of this complex problem, as well as the solutions it prescribed.

With the complexities involved in managing an expanding and increasingly diversified economy, basic weaknesses began to appear signaling the urgent need for an adjustment of production relations. Indeed, as one observer points out, in these conditions, "it became all the more evident that a system of control and administration of a factory at the discretion of a manager or a group of several specialists did not fit in with the new circumstances."[32] This was accentuated in those cases where the Party failed in the correct performance of its control functions. Arbitrary methods became a more common feature of management.

As far as the producers were concerned, they tended to react to this situation by losing interest in the production process, considering their work a necessary evil, merely a means of earning a livelihood. If such a frame of mind were allowed to become dominant, the possibilities for stimulating their initiative and enthusiasm would become correspondingly limited. The scope of the problem is vividly described by Kim Il Sung:

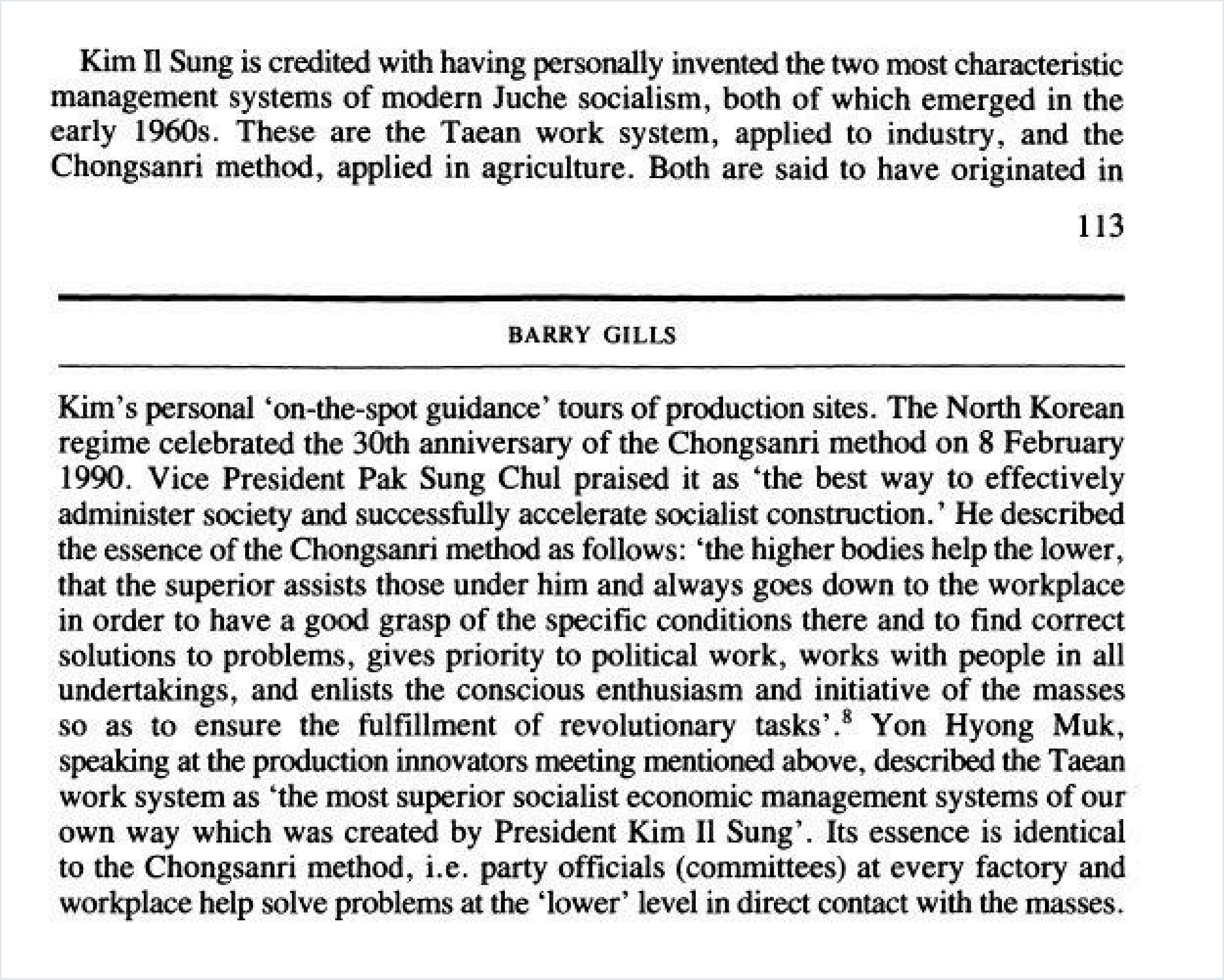
> It must be admitted that the old system of factory management, though it was a socialist one, still retained capitalist elements in many respects. Elements of bureaucracy, departmentalism, and individualism were found in a large measure in that system. Superiors used to shout commands at their subordinates in a bureaucratic manner, instead of going down to the lower units to help them; the spirit of cooperation between workshops was lacking; and among some people there was a tendency towards individualism of the "You attend to your business, and I'll do mine!" variety. Therefore, under the old system of work it was not possible to give full play to the activity and creative initiative of the workers, people busied themselves for nothing, and no achievements were made in production.[33]



From a middle- or long-range perspective, to remain at such a stage—or even, perhaps, to prolong it by strengthening the role of the managerial elite—can, despite the absence of private ownership of the means of production, mean a survival or revival of capitalist forms contrary to the project of socialism. The existence of such a possibility during the transition period testifies to the complexities of the capitalist mode of production, and thus to the importance of correct analysis of the interaction of social production relations in laying the foundation for a new socioeconomic system.

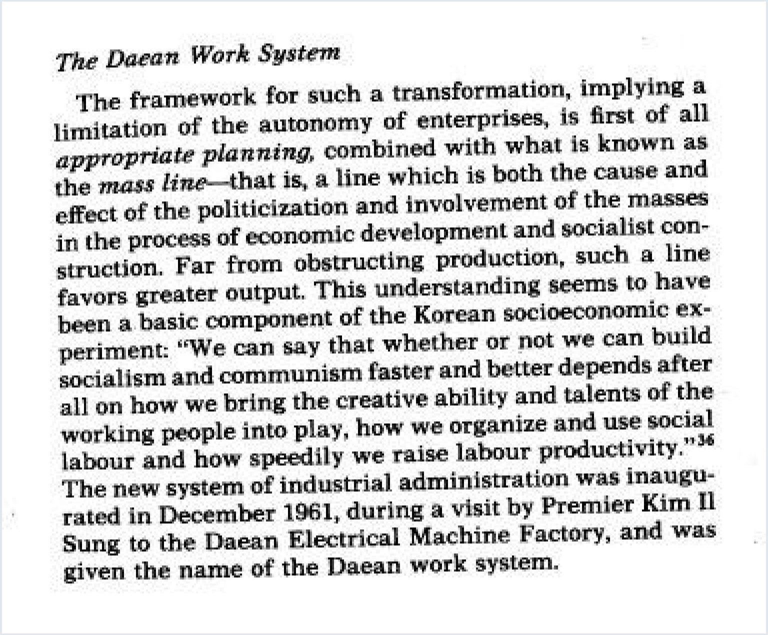
> As such means, state capitalism and nationalizations—even those put into operation by a workers' state—still do nothing more than displace the effects of the contradictions that result from the "private" character of the possession of the social means of production. If the change in the class character of political domination *opens the way* to the elimination of these contradictions, it is because it *opens the way to the elimination of the enterprise,* initially by "limiting" its autonomy, and then by making possible its "revolutionarization."[35]

The solution they came up with was an elegant one — the Chongsanri system, or as it was more popularly known, the Taean or Daean work system.



Kim Il Sung is credited with having personally invented the two most characteristic management systems of modern Juche socialism, both of which emerged in the early 1960s. These are the Taean work system, applied to industry, and the Chongsanri method, applied in agriculture. Both are said to have originated in Kim's personal 'on-the-spot guidance' tours of production sites. The North Korean regime celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Chongsanri method on 8 February 1990. Vice President Pak Sung Chul praised it as 'the best way to effectively administer society and successfully accelerate socialist construction.' He described the essence of the Chongsanri method as follows: 'the higher bodies help the lower, that the superior assists those under him and always goes down to the workplace in order to have a good grasp of the specific conditions there and to find correct solutions to problems, gives priority to political work, works with people in all undertakings, and enlists the conscious enthusiasm and initiative of the masses so as to ensure the fulfillment of revolutionary tasks'.[8] Yon Hyong Muk, speaking at the production innovators meeting mentioned above, described the Taean work system as 'the most superior socialist economic management systems of our own way which was created by President Kim Il Sung'. Its essence is identical to the Chongsanri method, i.e. party officials (committees) at every factory and workplace help solve problems at the 'lower' level in direct contact with the masses.

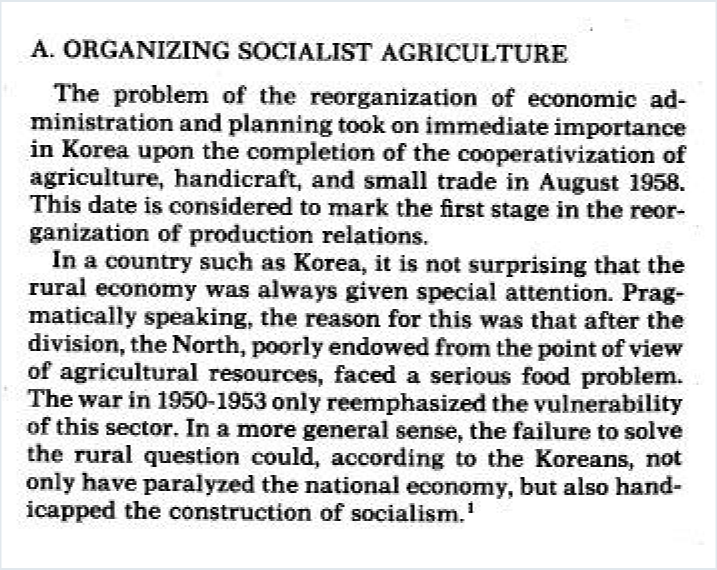
Technically they were two different systems, Chongsanri for agriculture and Taean for industry. But the basic principles were the same.



The Daean Work System

The framework for such a transformation, implying a limitation of the autonomy of enterprises, is first of all *appropriate planning,* combined with what is known as the *mass line*—that is, a line which is both the cause and effect of the politicization and involvement of the masses in the process of economic development and socialist construction. Far from obstructing production, such a line favors greater output. This understanding seems to have been a basic component of the Korean socioeconomic experiment: "We can say that whether or not we can build socialism and communism faster and better depends after all on how we bring the creative ability and talents of the working people into play, how we organize and use social labour and how speedily we raise labour productivity."[36] The new system of industrial administration was inaugurated in December 1961, during a visit by Premier Kim Il Sung to the Daean Electrical Machine Factory, and was given the name of the Daean work system.

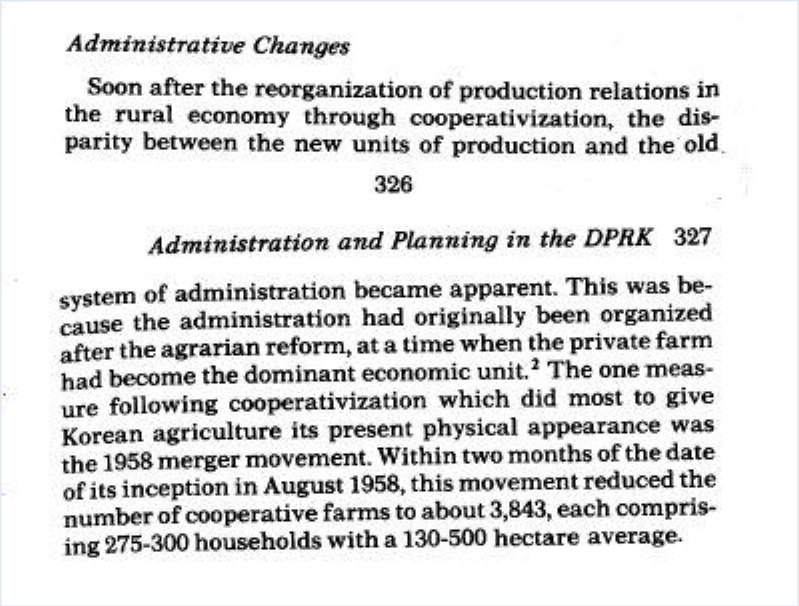
Agriculture came first. The revamping of the newly cooperatized farming system was seen as necessary to wipe away all vestiges of the old system.



A. ORGANIZING SOCIALIST AGRICULTURE

The problem of the reorganization of economic administration and planning took on immediate importance in Korea upon the completion of the cooperativization of agriculture, handicraft, and small trade in August 1958. This date is considered to mark the first stage in the reorganization of production relations.

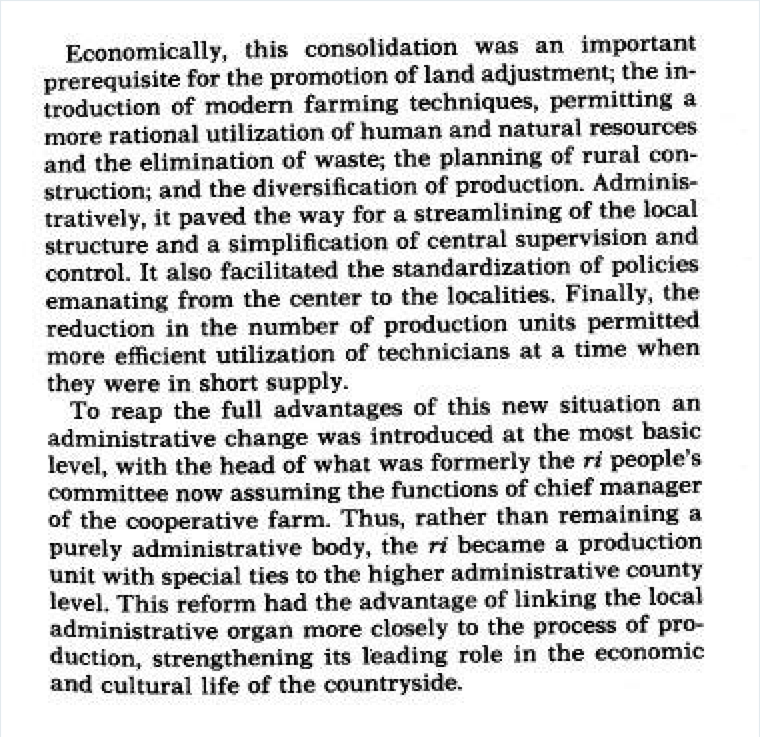
In a country such as Korea, it is not surprising that the rural economy was always given special attention. Pragmatically speaking, the reason for this was that after the division, the North, poorly endowed from the point of view of agricultural resources, faced a serious food problem. The war in 1950-1953 only reemphasized the vulnerability of this sector. In a more general sense, the failure to solve the rural question could, according to the Koreans, not only have paralyzed the national economy, but also handicapped the construction of socialism.[1]



Administrative Changes

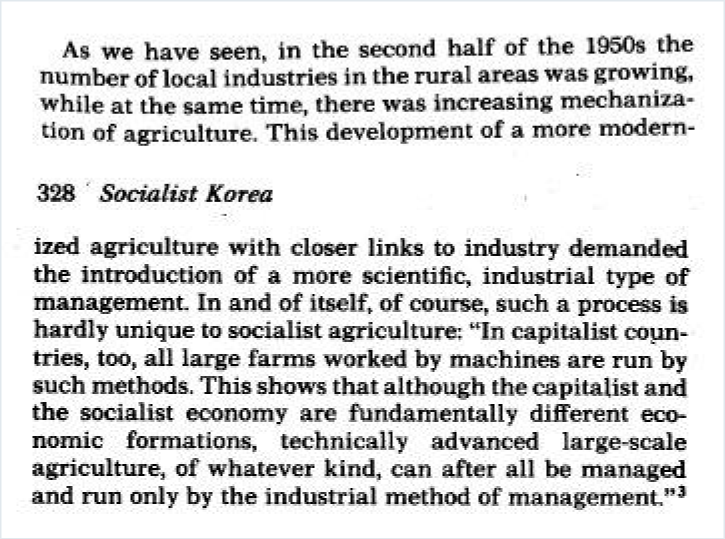
Soon after the reorganization of production relations in the rural economy through cooperativization, the disparity between the new units of production and the old system of administration became apparent. This was because the administration had originally been organized after the agrarian reform, at a time when the private farm had become the dominant economic unit.[2] The one measure following cooperativization which did most to give Korean agriculture its present physical appearance was the 1958 merger movement. Within two months of the date of its inception in August 1958, this movement reduced the number of cooperative farms to about 3,843, each comprising 275-300 households with a 130-500 hectare average.

The core of these changes was the replacement of chief managers with a committee. This was accompanied by other, sweeping changes to administration.

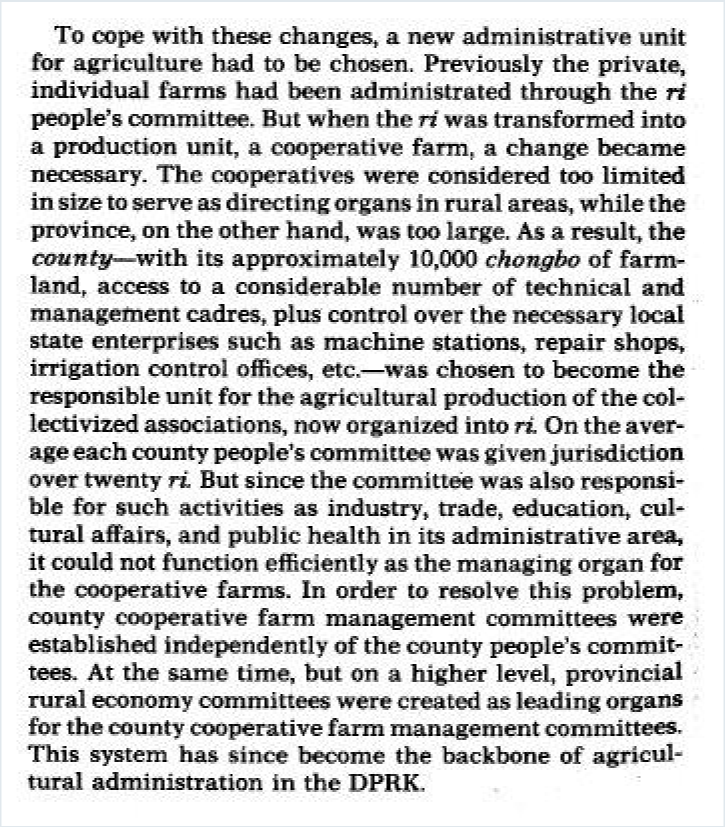


Economically, this consolidation was an important prerequisite for the promotion of land adjustment; the introduction of modern farming techniques, permitting a more rational utilization of human and natural resources and the elimination of waste; the planning of rural construction; and the diversification of production. Administratively, it paved the way for a streamlining of the local structure and a simplification of central supervision and control. It also facilitated the standardization of policies emanating from the center to the localities. Finally, the reduction in the number of production units permitted more efficient utilization of technicians at a time when they were in short supply.

To reap the full advantages of this new situation an administrative change was introduced at the most basic level, with the head of what was formerly the *ri* people's committee now assuming the functions of chief manager of the cooperative farm. Thus, rather than remaining a purely administrative body, the *ri* became a production unit with special ties to the higher administrative county level. This reform had the advantage of linking the local administrative organ more closely to the process of production, strengthening its leading role in the economic and cultural life of the countryside.



As we have seen, in the second half of the 1950s the number of local industries in the rural areas was growing, while at the same time, there was increasing mechanization of agriculture. This development of a more modernized agriculture with closer links to industry demanded the introduction of a more scientific, industrial type of management. In and of itself, of course, such a process is hardly unique to socialist agriculture: "In capitalist countries, too, all large farms worked by machines are run by such methods. This shows that although the capitalist and the socialist economy are fundamentally different economic formations, technically advanced large-scale agriculture, of whatever kind, can after all be managed and run only by the industrial method of management."[3]



To cope with these changes, a new administrative unit for agriculture had to be chosen. Previously the private, individual farms had been administrated through the *ri* people's committee. But when the *ri* was transformed into a production unit, a cooperative farm, a change became necessary. The cooperatives were considered too limited in size to serve as directing organs in rural areas, while the province, on the other hand, was too large. As a result, the *county*—with its approximately 10,000 *chongbo* of farmland, access to a considerable number of technical and management cadres, plus control over the necessary local state enterprises such as machine stations, repair shops, irrigation control offices, etc.—was chosen to become the responsible unit for the agricultural production of the collectivized associations, now organized into *ri*. On the average each county people's committee was given jurisdiction over twenty *ri*. But since the committee was also responsible for such activities as industry, trade, education, cultural affairs, and public health in its administrative area, it could not function efficiently as the managing organ for the cooperative farms. In order to resolve this problem, county cooperative farm management committees were established independently of the county people's committees. At the same time, but on a higher level, provincial rural economy committees were created as leading organs for the county cooperative farm management committees. This system has since become the backbone of agricultural administration in the DPRK.

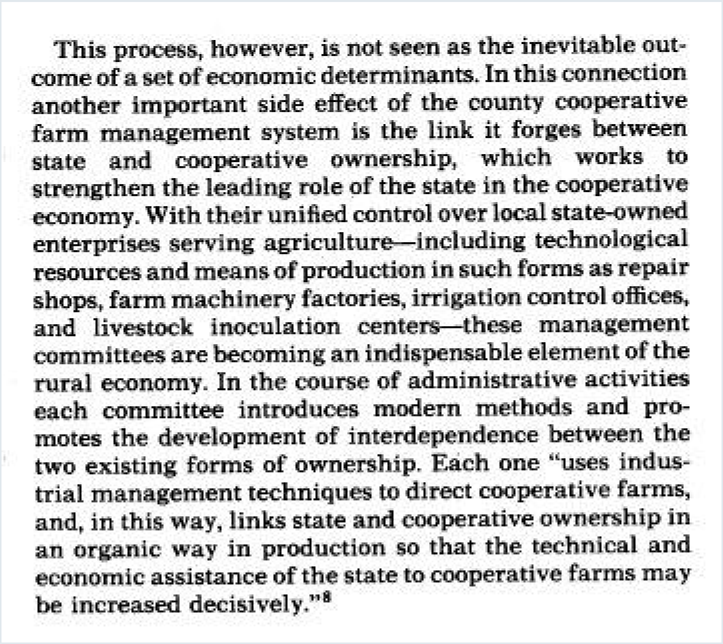
This brought management back down to the people, and included an incorporation of many key services into the structure.

This reform strengthened the functioning of state organs in the management and planning of the entire economy. Formerly, the people's committees had dealt with the private sector of the economy, assuming responsibility for controlling and adjusting its development. But with the establishment of socialist relations of production and the development of local industries, the situation demanded that all aspects of the local economy, both its agricultural and industrial sectors, be directed and coordinated according to a plan. In addition to their planning functions and their duties of municipal administration, the new committees became responsible for the organization of material supplies for the local working people as well as for education, health, and cultural activities.[4]

Similarly, the expansion of industry generally, and of local industries in particular, proved incompatible with the old system of administration. To cope with the new problems a reform movement was started to shift some of the administrative responsibility from the central organs to a level closer to the local production units themselves. "In order to bring the guidance of industry by the state organs closer to the production sites and to guarantee concrete and flexible guidance it was necessary to relieve the ministries and bureaus of their burdens to a considerable extent and definitely strengthen the local organs of industrial management."[5]

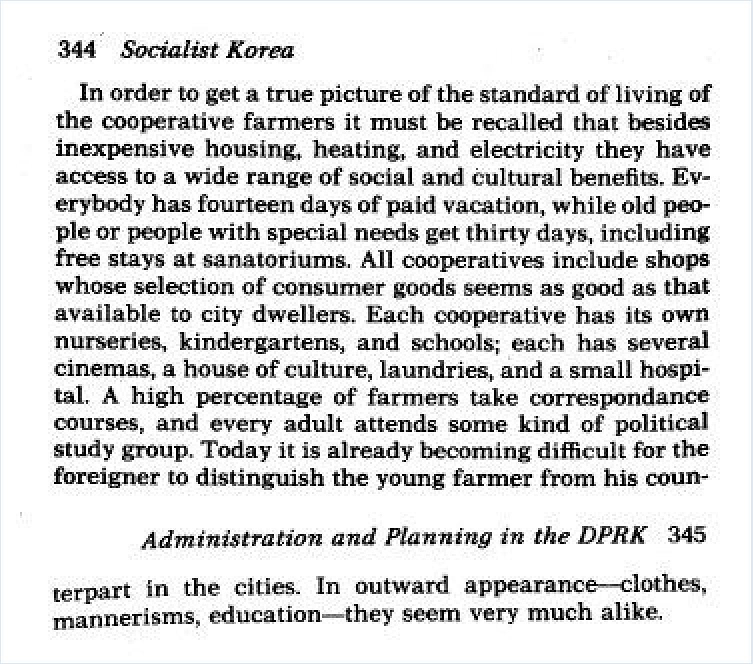
The granting of greater responsibilities to local state organs left the central ministries free to concentrate on the larger-scale, national industries. It also promoted the development of local industries, for the economic effect of the establishment of provincial economic organs and the degree of independence and initiative it conferred on the provinces allowed a more rational utilization of the resources and potentialities of local communities. Politically speaking, this had the advantage of rendering the responsibility for production and distribution more concrete. Whereas overcentralized administration tends to give people a sense of impotence vis-à-vis what seems to be an abstract and distant decision-making body, usually located in the capital, the enhancement of the role of local organs, with direct contact between the administrators and the administered, strengthens the democratic, self-governing aspect of the system.

Also key — and something you won't find even in Germany's codetermination system — these committees were linked inexorably with the massive state apparatus, creating an unbroken line between government institutions and the workers themselves.



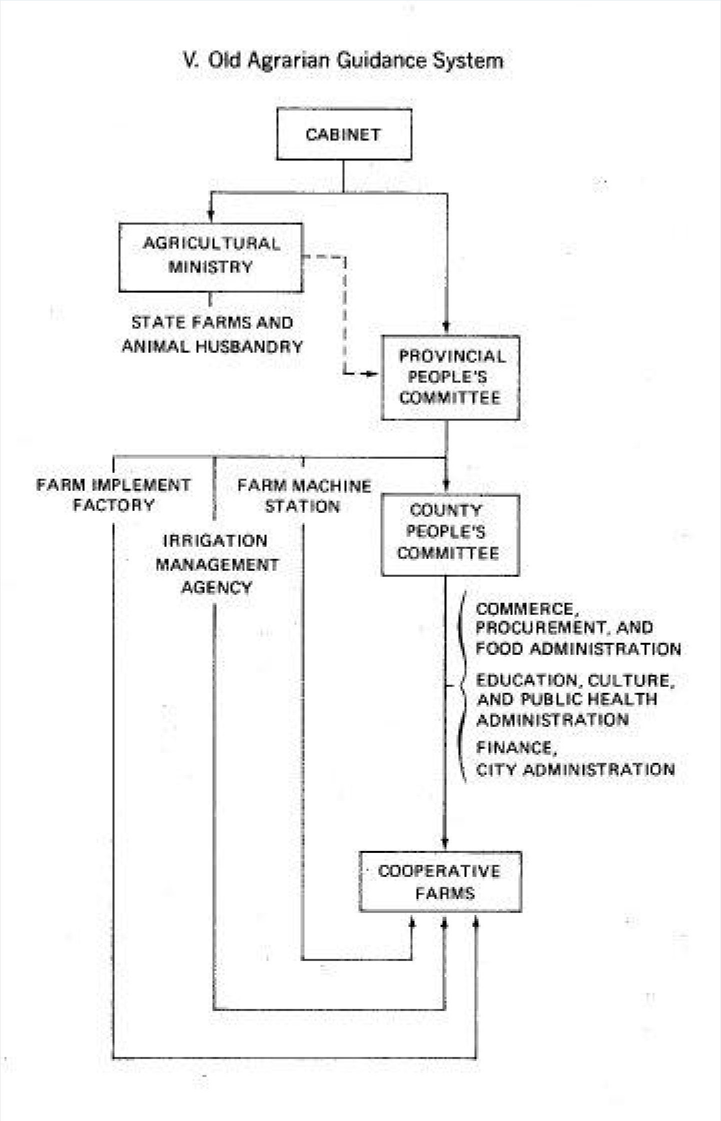
This process, however, is not seen as the inevitable outcome of a set of economic determinants. In this connection another important side effect of the county cooperative farm management system is the link it forges between state and cooperative ownership, which works to strengthen the leading role of the state in the cooperative economy. With their unified control over local state-owned enterprises serving agriculture—including technological resources and means of production in such forms as repair shops, farm machinery factories, irrigation control offices, and livestock inoculation centers—these management committees are becoming an indispensable element of the rural economy. In the course of administrative activities each committee introduces modern methods and promotes the development of interdependence between the two existing forms of ownership. Each one "uses industrial management techniques to direct cooperative farms, and, in this way, links state and cooperative ownership in an organic way in production so that the technical and economic assistance of the state to cooperative farms may be increased decisively."[8]

Results of this policy were immediate and palpable, with a marked change in culture and slow erosion of class differences. Some aspects of traditional rural life remained, of course.

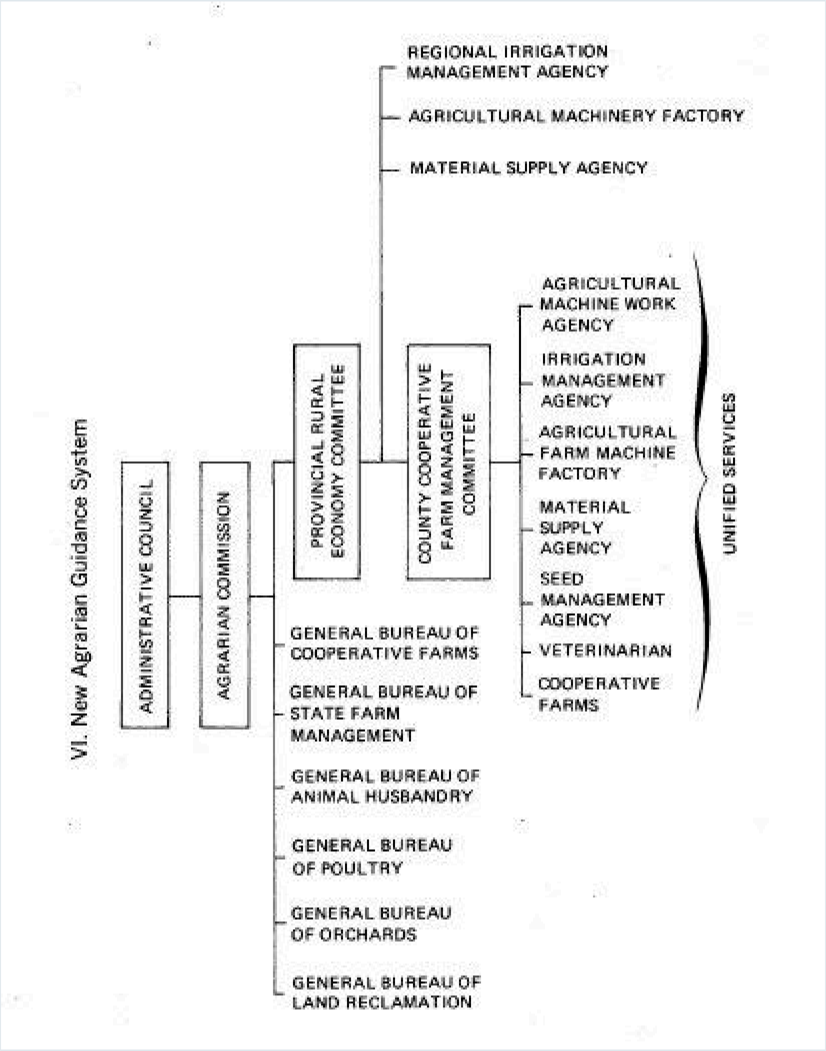


In order to get a true picture of the standard of living of the cooperative farmers it must be recalled that besides inexpensive housing, heating, and electricity they have access to a wide range of social and cultural benefits. Everybody has fourteen days of paid vacation, while old people or people with special needs get thirty days, including free stays at sanatoriums. All cooperatives include shops whose selection of consumer goods seems as good as that available to city dwellers. Each cooperative has its own nurseries, kindergartens, and schools; each has several cinemas, a house of culture, laundries, and a small hospital. A high percentage of farmers take correspondance courses, and every adult attends some kind of political study group. Today it is already becoming difficult for the foreigner to distinguish the young farmer from his counterpart in the cities. In outward appearance—clothes, mannerisms, education—they seem very much alike.

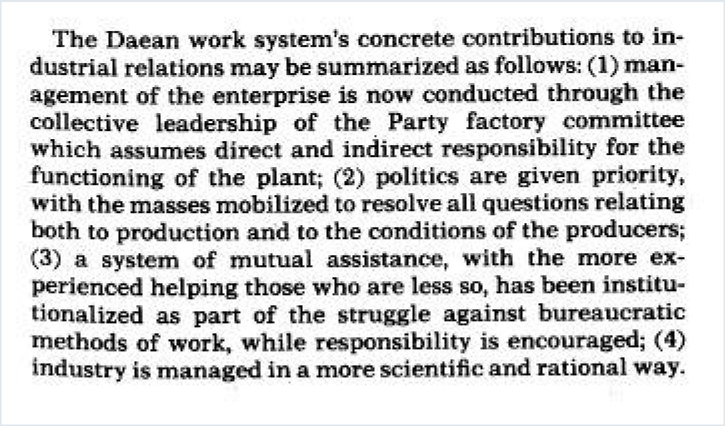
The old system of agricultural management.


V. Old Agrarian Guidance System
CABINET
AGRICULTURAL MINISTRY
STATE FARMS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY
PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE
FARM IMPLEMENT FACTORY
FARM MACHINE STATION
IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT AGENCY
COUNTY PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE
COMMERCE, PROCUREMENT, AND FOOD ADMINISTRATION
EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
FINANCE, CITY ADMINISTRATION
COOPERATIVE FARMS

The new way. Note the more direct institutional links via the co-op farm management committee.

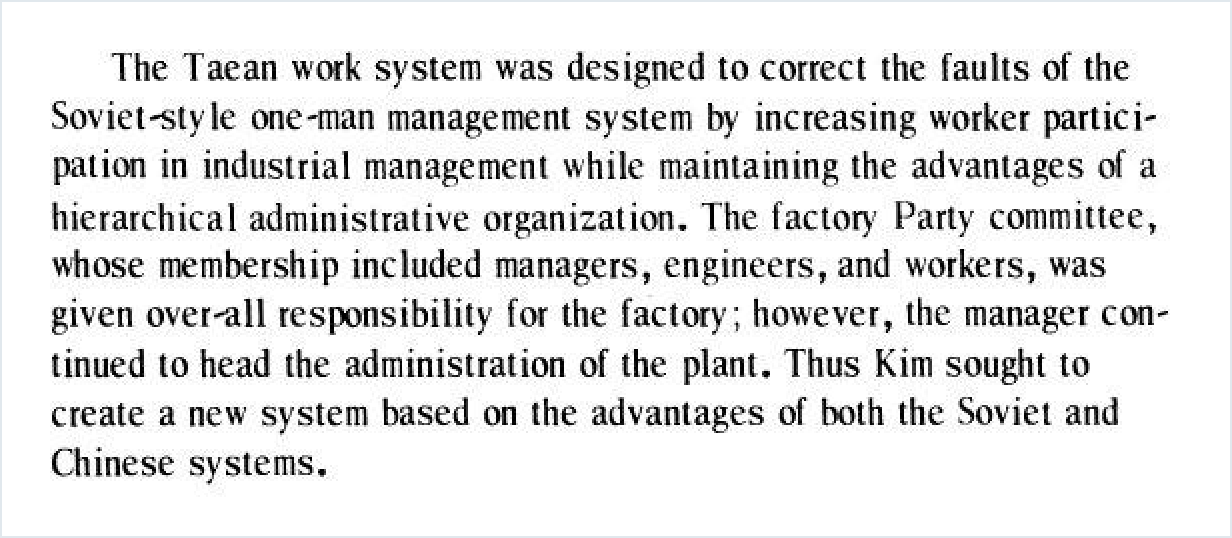

VI. New Agrarian Guidance System
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
AGRARIAN COMMISSION
PROVINCIAL RURAL ECONOMY COMMITTEE
REGIONAL IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT AGENCY
AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY FACTORY
MATERIAL SUPPLY AGENCY
COUNTY COOPERATIVE FARM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
AGRICULTURAL MACHINE WORK AGENCY
IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT AGENCY
AGRICULTURAL FARM MACHINE FACTORY
MATERIAL SUPPLY AGENCY
SEED MANAGEMENT AGENCY
VETERINARIAN
COOPERATIVE FARMS
UNIFIED SERVICES
GENERAL BUREAU OF COOPERATIVE FARMS
GENERAL BUREAU OF STATE FARM MANAGEMENT
GENERAL BUREAU OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY
GENERAL BUREAU OF POULTRY
GENERAL BUREAU OF ORCHARDS
GENERAL BUREAU OF LAND RECLAMATION

As Chongsanri took hold in the farms, Taean did the same for industry. Here are the broad effects of the change.



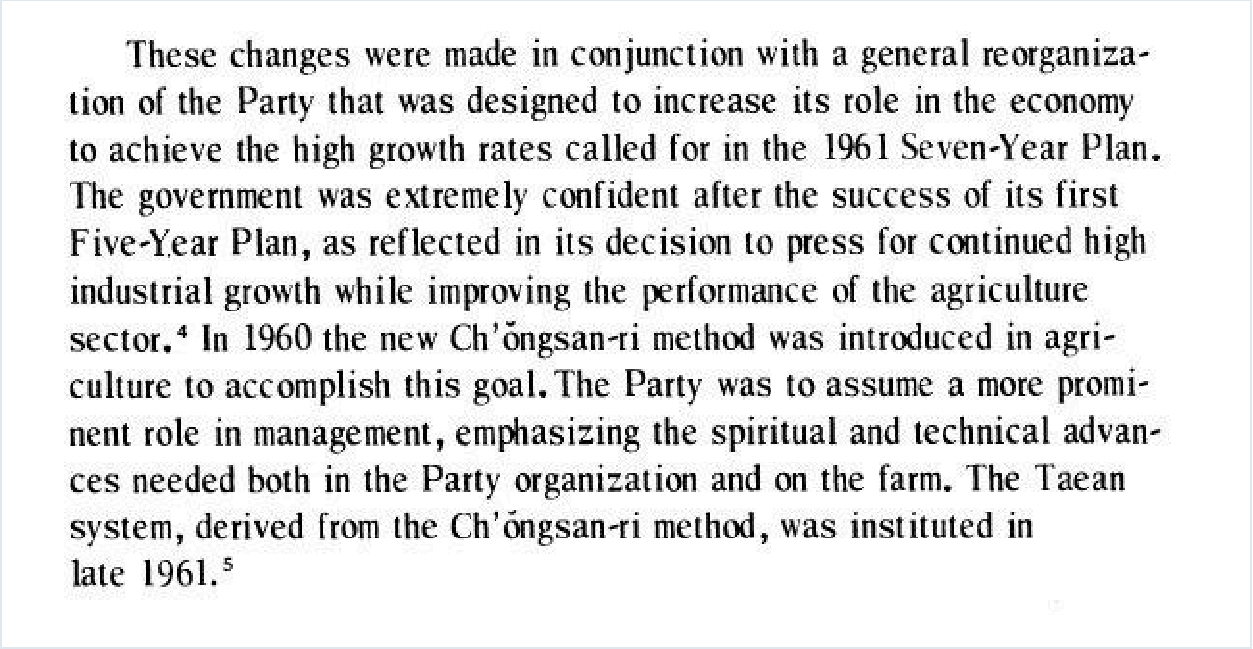
The Daean work system's concrete contributions to industrial relations may be summarized as follows: (1) management of the enterprise is now conducted through the collective leadership of the Party factory committee which assumes direct and indirect responsibility for the functioning of the plant; (2) politics are given priority, with the masses mobilized to resolve all questions relating both to production and to the conditions of the producers; (3) a system of mutual assistance, with the more experienced helping those who are less so, has been institutionalized as part of the struggle against bureaucratic methods of work, while responsibility is encouraged; (4) industry is managed in a more scientific and rational way.

The Taean system was something of a mix. It maintained a separate manager, like in the Soviet system, but ultimate decision-making power rested with a committee, similar to the Chinese method.

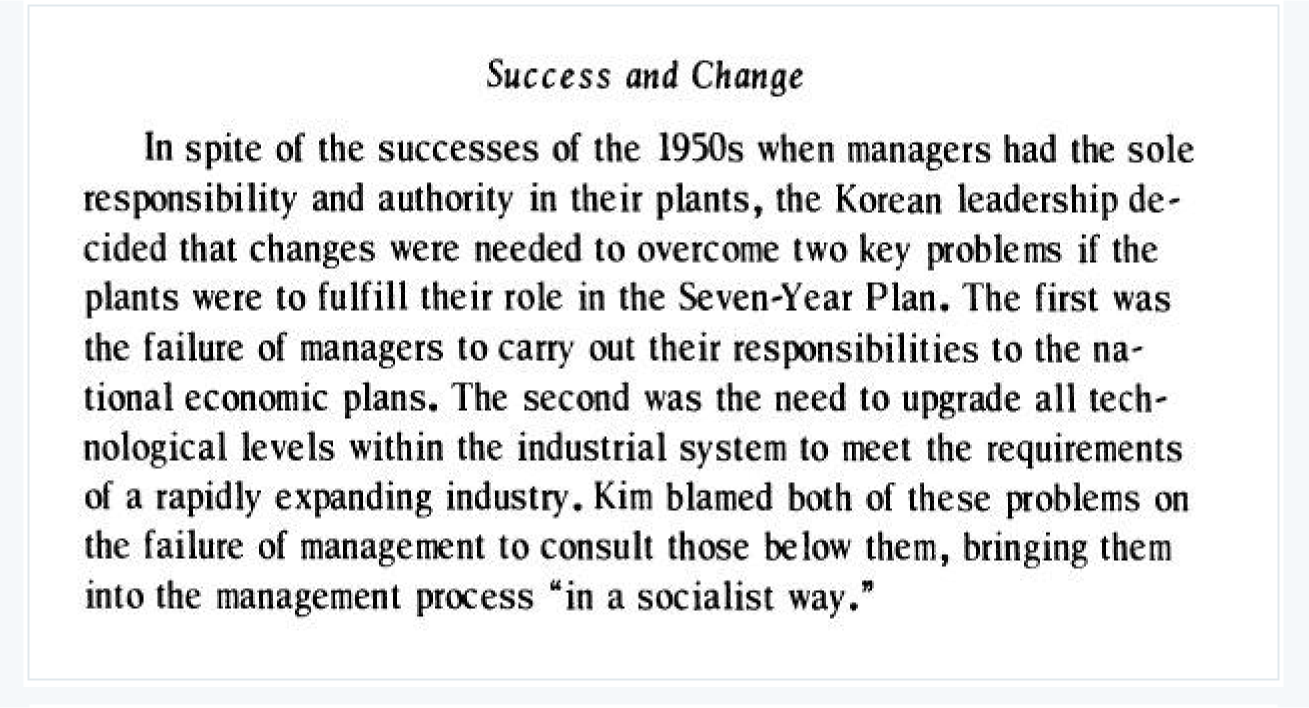


The Taean work system was designed to correct the faults of the Soviet-style one-man management system by increasing worker participation in industrial management while maintaining the advantages of a hierarchical administrative organization. The factory Party committee, whose membership included managers, engineers, and workers, was given over-all responsibility for the factory; however, the manager continued to head the administration of the plant. Thus Kim sought to create a new system based on the advantages of both the Soviet and Chinese systems.

These changes were made to correct inefficiencies and "bureaucratism" in management. A look at the impetus for implementation here.



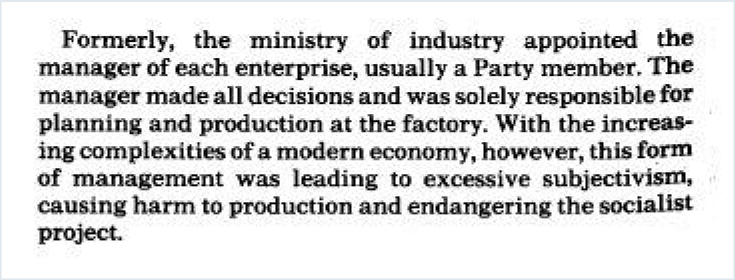
These changes were made in conjunction with a general reorganization of the Party that was designed to increase its role in the economy to achieve the high growth rates called for in the 1961 Seven-Year Plan. The government was extremely confident after the success of its first Five-Year Plan, as reflected in its decision to press for continued high industrial growth while improving the performance of the agriculture sector.[4] In 1960 the new Ch'ŏngsan-ri method was introduced in agriculture to accomplish this goal. The Party was to assume a more prominent role in management, emphasizing the spiritual and technical advances needed both in the Party organization and on the farm. The Taean system, derived from the Ch'ŏngsan-ri method, was instituted in late 1961.[5]



Success and Change

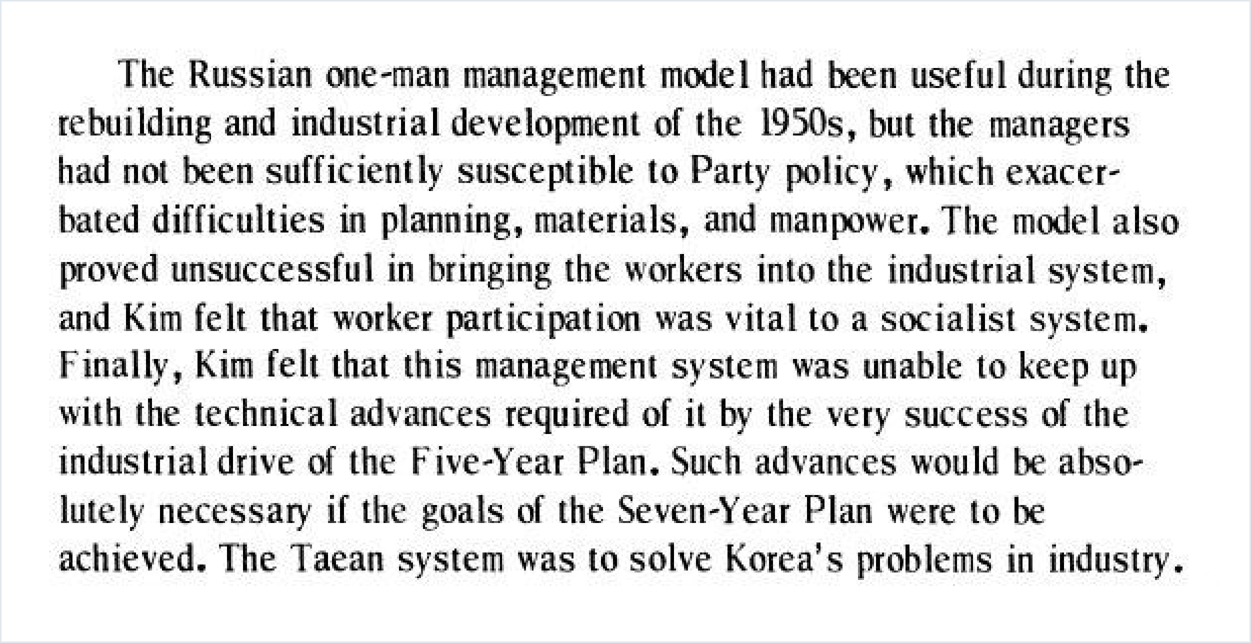
In spite of the successes of the 1950s when managers had the sole responsibility and authority in their plants, the Korean leadership decided that changes were needed to overcome two key problems if the plants were to fulfill their role in the Seven-Year Plan. The first was the failure of managers to carry out their responsibilities to the national economic plans. The second was the need to upgrade all technological levels within the industrial system to meet the requirements of a rapidly expanding industry. Kim blamed both of these problems on the failure of management to consult those below them, bringing them into the management process "in a socialist way."

Previous methods of administration had issues. You can see the need for a new way of thinking.



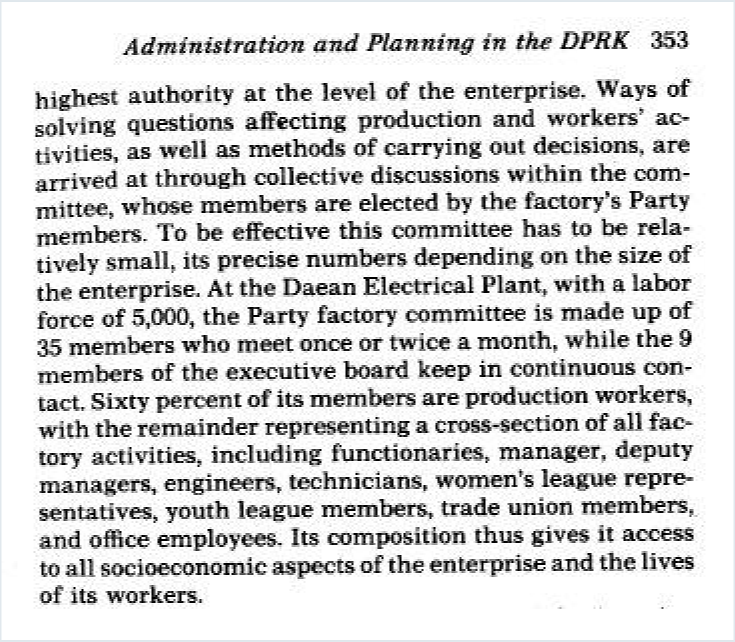
Formerly, the ministry of industry appointed the manager of each enterprise, usually a Party member. The manager made all decisions and was solely responsible for planning and production at the factory. With the increasing complexities of a modern economy, however, this form of management was leading to excessive subjectivism, causing harm to production and endangering the socialist project.

This would serve as a manifestation of workplace democracy and participation in the firm — and the socialist system — at all levels.



The Russian one-man management model had been useful during the rebuilding and industrial development of the 1950s, but the managers had not been sufficiently susceptible to Party policy, which exacerbated difficulties in planning, materials, and manpower. The model also proved unsuccessful in bringing the workers into the industrial system, and Kim felt that worker participation was vital to a socialist system. Finally, Kim felt that this management system was unable to keep up with the technical advances required of it by the very success of the industrial drive of the Five-Year Plan. Such advances would be absolutely necessary if the goals of the Seven-Year Plan were to be achieved. The Taean system was to solve Korea's problems in industry.

Here's how it worked. Note the really important number: 60 percent of committee members are production-line workers.



highest authority at the level of the enterprise. Ways of solving questions affecting production and workers' activities, as well as methods of carrying out decisions, are arrived at through collective discussions within the committee, whose members are elected by the factory's Party members. To be effective this committee has to be relatively small, its precise numbers depending on the size of the enterprise. At the Daean Electrical Plant, with a labor force of 5,000, the Party factory committee is made up of 35 members who meet once or twice a month, while the 9 members of the executive board keep in continuous contact. Sixty percent of its members are production workers, with the remainder representing a cross-section of all factory activities, including functionaries, manager, deputy managers, engineers, technicians, women's league representatives, youth league members, trade union members, and office employees. Its composition thus gives it access to all socioeconomic aspects of the enterprise and the lives of its workers.

This diffuse structure allowed for smooth lines of communication between management, technical personnel, and production workers.

The Taean system was designed to increase productivity by increasing communication between the factories and the provincial and national authorities, who directed economic activites, and between the various groups within the factories. This was to improve the planning process, which depended on a continual flow of accurate information between all levels of the system from the shop to the national leadership, to improve the accomplishment of plans by ensuring adequate communication and coordination between management, technical sections, and labor in the plants, and to raise the technical level of everyone within the system. Since neither the industrial ministries nor the regional Party committees had performed these tasks as well as had been hoped, the Party organization was revitalized to play a larger role in the economic sector.

Because the factory committee included managers, engineers, and workers, Kim believed that it would improve intrafactory communication and coordination as well as facilitating the mobilization of workers by increasing their commitment to their jobs.[15] Kim felt that the exchanges between the various sections of the plants on the committee would help to raise the technical knowledge of the entire factory, one of the vital tasks that had to be accomplished if Korean industry was to continue to grow. These twin functions of communication and education were vital to the mass line, which Kim has said was central to Korea's methods of management.[16]

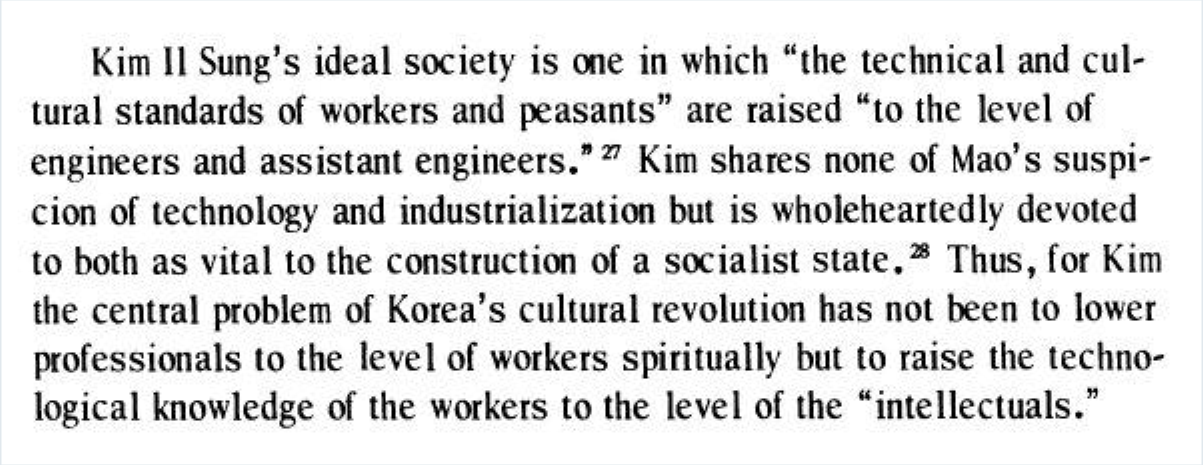
The mass line is a method of work aimed at communication, education, and legitimization. The mass line has long been a basic principle of Communist rule in Korea, and Kim's vision of it is much like that of Mao Tse-tung.[17] The leader is to go to the masses to study problems, then formulate policy, and return to the people to explain the policy and assist in its implementation.[18] The final step is for the leader to make sure that policies are being followed and to give additional assistance where necessary. Because the Communist leader reflects the will of the masses, he has a right to his authority, but failure to follow the mass line undermines efficiency as well as legitimacy.

Kim felt that the exchange of ideas between management, engineers, and labor would raise the educational level of all. More modern production processes required that managers continually improve their knowledge of technology, while engineers, on the other hand, had to be made aware of management problems. They were also to encourage and develop suggestions from the workers who actually dealt with machinery and the production line. Workers were to learn from both technicians and management, and all sections were to improve their understanding of the importance of their jobs. Having improved their own knowledge, committee members were expected to move out into their various sections to upgrade the technical and spiritual levels of their fellow Party members, who, in turn, would enlighten the workers. "If things are worked in this way, all problems will be solved correctly and great innovations will be made in production."[22]

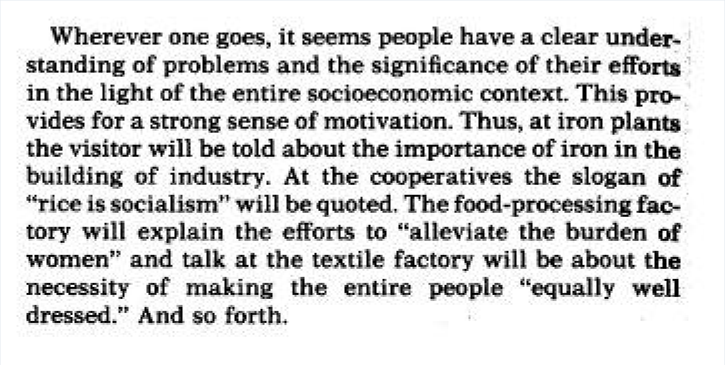
The mobilization of workers was expected to be easier than it had been because workers themselves were participating in the top management of the factory. This was expected to have appeal as a democratic procedure, and since plans would be more closely related to the capabilities of the workshops and demoralizing inefficiencies would be reduced, the workers would be more willing than ever to devote themselves to their jobs. Top policy decisions would no longer be made by the manager alone but by the Party committee. The men who made those decisions would come from all sections of the factories, privy to individual strengths, weaknesses, ideas, and desires of the workers.

The fact that the managers and engineers, responsible for the implementation of the collective decisions of the factory committee, likewise belong to it, allows for close coordination at the highest level of the enterprise, enabling political, administrative, and economic work to be carried out in a more coherent and purposeful manner. The collective leadership practiced through the Party factory commitee is considered a defense against subjectivism, enabling the combined wisdom of workers, technicians, and administrators to play a determining role.

Another, hardly incidental result of the Taean system: education for all links in the chain, both in terms of administration and ideology. The long-term goal of abolishing class differences can clearly be seen.

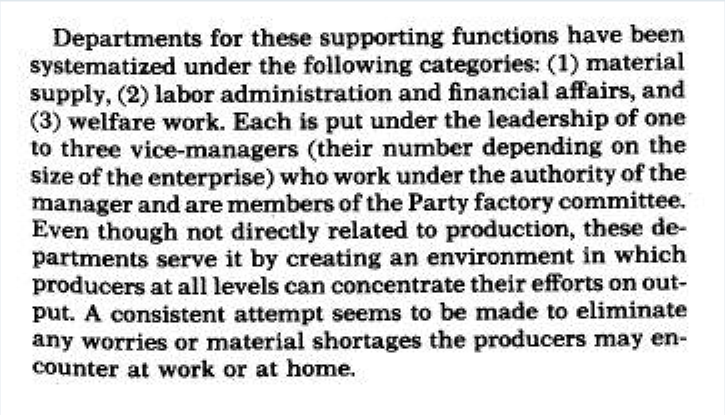


Kim Il Sung's ideal society is one in which "the technical and cultural standards of workers and peasants" are raised "to the level of engineers and assistant engineers."[27] Kim shares none of Mao's suspicion of technology and industrialization but is wholeheartedly devoted to both as vital to the construction of a socialist state.[28] Thus, for Kim the central problem of Korea's cultural revolution has not been to lower professionals to the level of workers spiritually but to raise the technological knowledge of the workers to the level of the "intellectuals."



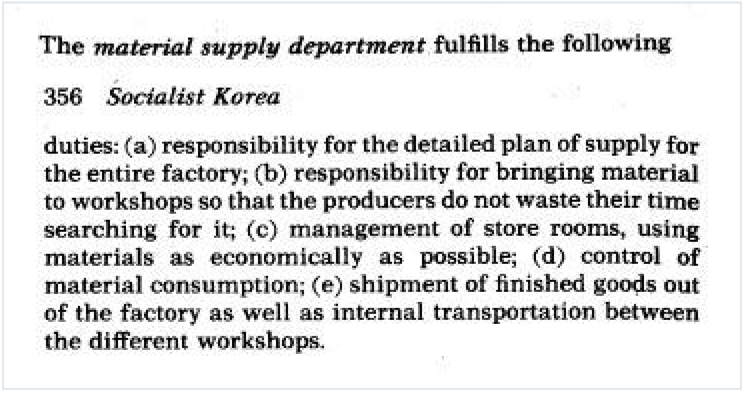
Wherever one goes, it seems people have a clear understanding of problems and the significance of their efforts in the light of the entire socioeconomic context. This provides for a strong sense of motivation. Thus, at iron plants the visitor will be told about the importance of iron in the building of industry. At the cooperatives the slogan of "rice is socialism" will be quoted. The food-processing factory will explain the efforts to "alleviate the burden of women" and talk at the textile factory will be about the necessity of making the entire people "equally well dressed." And so forth.

This was hardly a fig leaf or token gesture. Committees had real responsibilities. Sub-departments handled other areas. Their responsibilities were as follows.



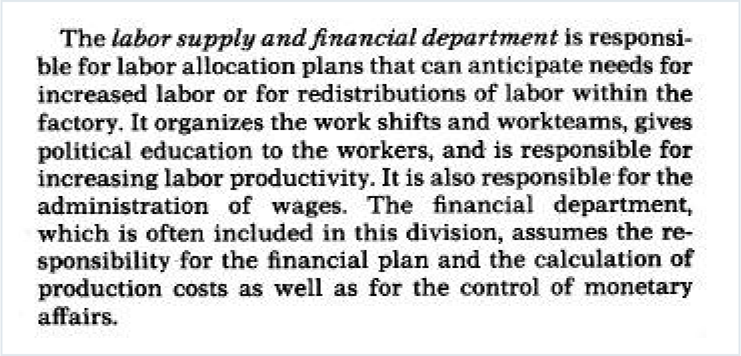
Departments for these supporting functions have been systematized under the following categories: (1) material supply, (2) labor administration and financial affairs, and (3) welfare work. Each is put under the leadership of one to three vice-managers (their number depending on the size of the enterprise) who work under the authority of the manager and are members of the Party factory committee. Even though not directly related to production, these departments serve it by creating an environment in which producers at all levels can concentrate their efforts on output. A consistent attempt seems to be made to eliminate any worries or material shortages the producers may encounter at work or at home.

One department handled materials and logistics. Fairly important, no?



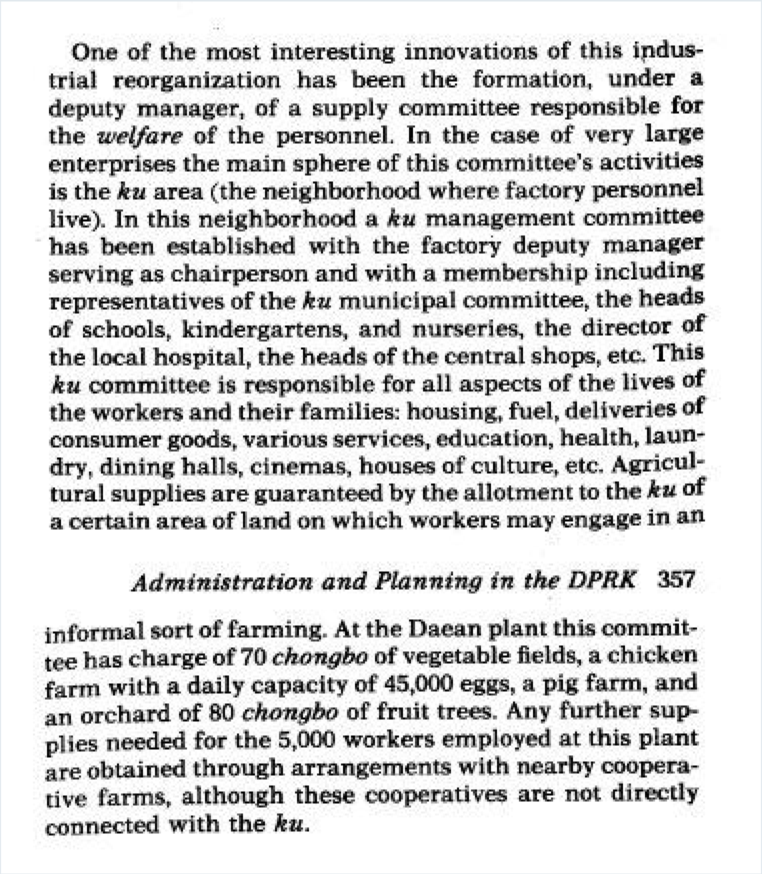
The ***material supply department*** fulfills the following duties: (a) responsibility for the detailed plan of supply for the entire factory; (b) responsibility for bringing material to workshops so that the producers do not waste their time searching for it; (c) management of store rooms, using materials as economically as possible; (d) control of material consumption; (e) shipment of finished goods out of the factory as well as internal transportation between the different workshops.

Another dealt with labor and finance. Again, pretty major.



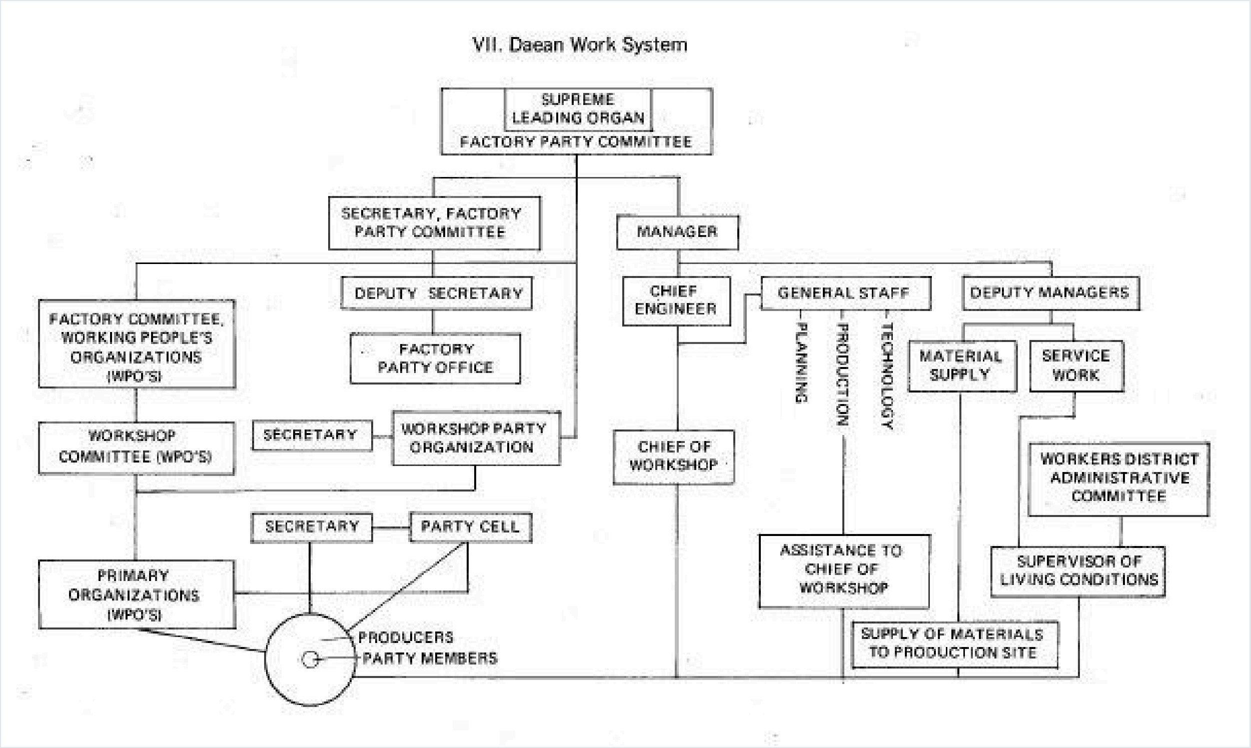
The *labor supply and financial department* is responsible for labor allocation plans that can anticipate needs for increased labor or for redistributions of labor within the factory. It organizes the work shifts and workteams, gives political education to the workers, and is responsible for increasing labor productivity. It is also responsible for the administration of wages. The financial department, which is often included in this division, assumes the responsibility for the financial plan and the calculation of production costs as well as for the control of monetary affairs.

The last one tackled general welfare and administration of basic services for workers. Notice there was a communication network between industrial firms and cooperative farms. Early attempts at a proto-communism can be seen here.



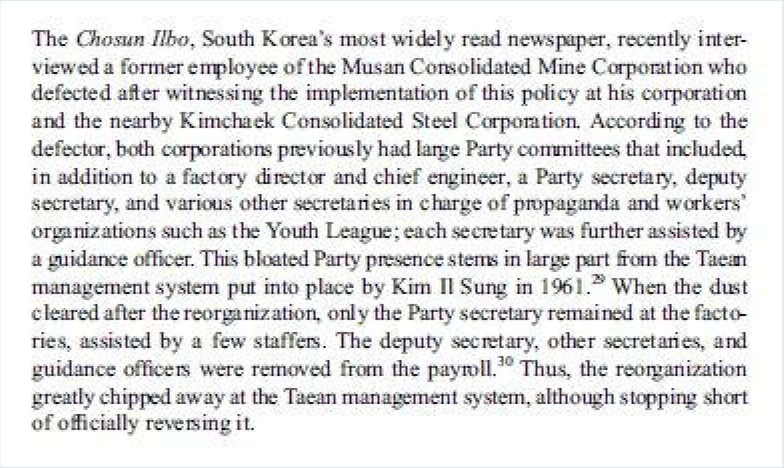
One of the most interesting innovations of this industrial reorganization has been the formation, under a deputy manager, of a supply committee responsible for the *welfare* of the personnel. In the case of very large enterprises the main sphere of this committee's activities is the *ku* area (the neighborhood where factory personnel live). In this neighborhood a *ku* management committee has been established with the factory deputy manager serving as chairperson and with a membership including representatives of the *ku* municipal committee, the heads of schools, kindergartens, and nurseries, the director of the local hospital, the heads of the central shops, etc. This *ku* committee is responsible for all aspects of the lives of the workers and their families: housing, fuel, deliveries of consumer goods, various services, education, health, laundry, dining halls, cinemas, houses of culture, etc. Agricultural supplies are guaranteed by the allotment to the *ku* of a certain area of land on which workers may engage in an informal sort of farming. At the Daean plant this committee has charge of 70 *chongbo* of vegetable fields, a chicken farm with a daily capacity of 45,000 eggs, a pig farm, and an orchard of 80 *chongbo* of fruit trees. Any further supplies needed for the 5,000 workers employed at this plant are obtained through arrangements with nearby cooperative farms, although these cooperatives are not directly connected with the *ku*.

All three department heads served on the Taean committee and were thus directly accountable to the people on it — a committee which, I'll repeat, had a decisive majority of workers. Check out this cool chart.


VII. Daean Work System

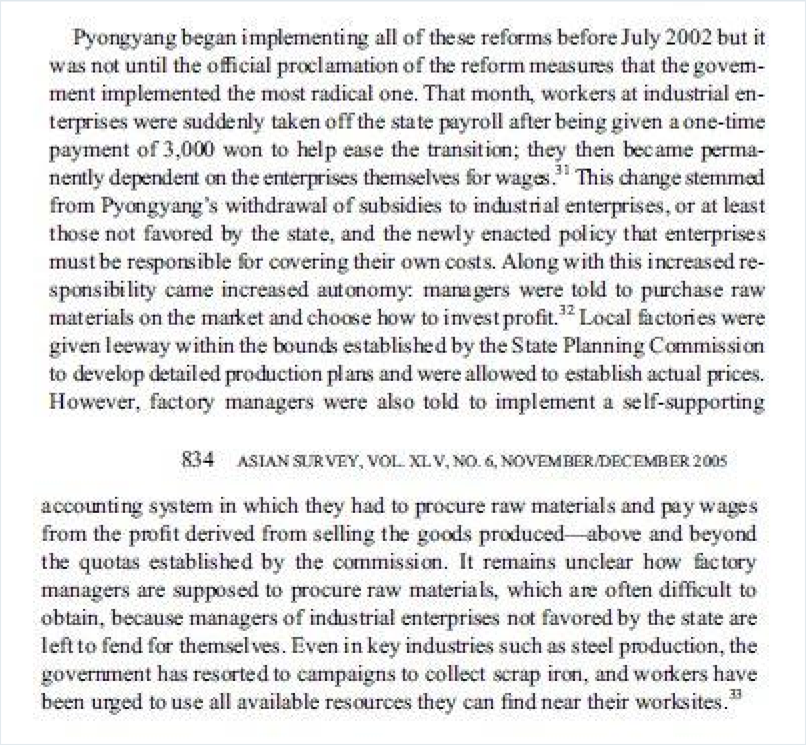
SUPREME LEADING ORGAN
FACTORY PARTY COMMITTEE
SECRETARY, FACTORY PARTY COMMITTEE
MANAGER
DEPUTY SECRETARY
FACTORY PARTY OFFICE
FACTORY COMMITTEE, WORKING PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS (WPO'S)
CHIEF ENGINEER
GENERAL STAFF
DEPUTY MANAGERS
PLANNING
PRODUCTION
TECHNOLOGY
MATERIAL SUPPLY
SERVICE WORK
WORKSHOP COMMITTEE (WPO'S)
SECRETARY
WORKSHOP PARTY ORGANIZATION
CHIEF OF WORKSHOP
WORKERS DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
SECRETARY
PARTY CELL
ASSISTANCE TO CHIEF OF WORKSHOP
SUPERVISOR OF LIVING CONDITIONS
PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONS (WPO'S)
PRODUCERS
PARTY MEMBERS
SUPPLY OF MATERIALS TO PRODUCTION SITE

Now, as neat as this whole system was, I'm unhappy to report things have changed since the 1970s, where much of the sourcing on this system comes from.
While I can't be entirely sure, as the post-millennium sources I've found cite defector testimony as authoritative, it seems at least some aspects of the system are different now.
After the Arduous March of the 1990s, cutbacks were needed at all levels of government. This meant a trimming of the Taean committee and a return to the Soviet-style management system of yesteryear.



The *Chosun Ilbo*, South Korea's most widely read newspaper, recently interviewed a former employee of the Musan Consolidated Mine Corporation who defected after witnessing the implementation of this policy at his corporation and the nearby Kimchaek Consolidated Steel Corporation. According to the defector, both corporations previously had large Party committees that included, in addition to a factory director and chief engineer, a Party secretary, deputy secretary, and various other secretaries in charge of propaganda and workers' organizations such as the Youth League; each secretary was further assisted by a guidance officer. This bloated Party presence stems in large part from the Taean management system put into place by Kim Il Sung in 1961.[29] When the dust cleared after the reorganization, only the Party secretary remained at the factories, assisted by a few staffers. The deputy secretary, other secretaries, and guidance officers were removed from the payroll.[30] Thus, the reorganization greatly chipped away at the Taean management system, although stopping short of officially reversing it.

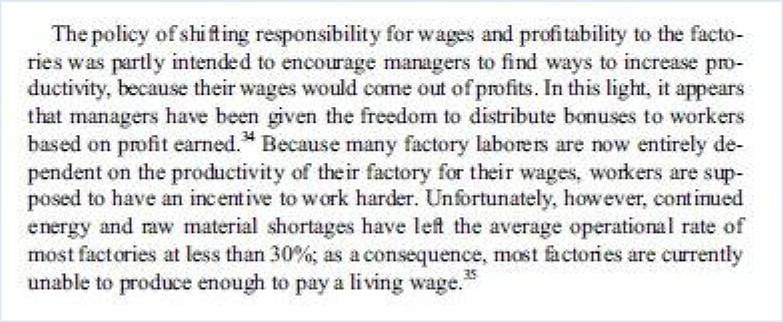
As a result of early-2000s reforms, enterprises were expected to make their own plans and come up with their own solutions for raising productivity.



Pyongyang began implementing all of these reforms before July 2002 but it was not until the official proclamation of the reform measures that the government implemented the most radical one. That month, workers at industrial enterprises were suddenly taken off the state payroll after being given a one-time payment of 3,000 won to help ease the transition; they then became permanently dependent on the enterprises themselves for wages.[31] This change stemmed from Pyongyang's withdrawal of subsidies to industrial enterprises, or at least those not favored by the state, and the newly enacted policy that enterprises must be responsible for covering their own costs. Along with this increased responsibility came increased autonomy: managers were told to purchase raw materials on the market and choose how to invest profit.[32] Local factories were given leeway within the bounds established by the State Planning Commission to develop detailed production plans and were allowed to establish actual prices. However, factory managers were also told to implement a self-supporting

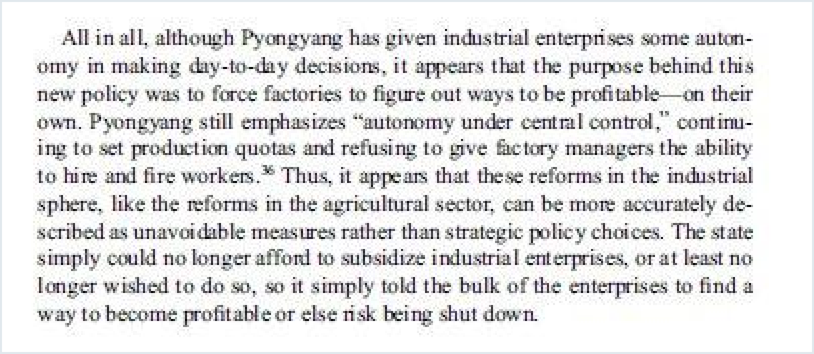
accounting system in which they had to procure raw materials and pay wages from the profit derived from selling the goods produced—above and beyond the quotas established by the commission. It remains unclear how factory managers are supposed to procure raw materials, which are often difficult to obtain, because managers of industrial enterprises not favored by the state are left to fend for themselves. Even in key industries such as steel production, the government has resorted to campaigns to collect scrap iron, and workers have been urged to use all available resources they can find near their worksites.[33]

Like the Soviet system, wages and bonuses are still paid out of profits, ameliorating or negating the extraction of surplus value. This allows for a system that is less participatory than before, but still retains its socialist character.



The policy of shifting responsibility for wages and profitability to the factories was partly intended to encourage managers to find ways to increase productivity, because their wages would come out of profits. In this light, it appears that managers have been given the freedom to distribute bonuses to workers based on profit earned.[34] Because many factory laborers are now entirely dependent on the productivity of their factory for their wages, workers are supposed to have an incentive to work harder. Unfortunately, however, continued energy and raw material shortages have left the average operational rate of most factories at less than 30%; as a consequence, most factories are currently unable to produce enough to pay a living wage.[35]

At the very least, managers still do not have hiring or firing power, limiting the destructive influence of a reserve army of labor on the economy.



All in all, although Pyongyang has given industrial enterprises some autonomy in making day-to-day decisions, it appears that the purpose behind this new policy was to force factories to figure out ways to be profitable—on their own. Pyongyang still emphasizes "autonomy under central control," continuing to set production quotas and refusing to give factory managers the ability to hire and fire workers.[36] Thus, it appears that these reforms in the industrial sphere, like the reforms in the agricultural sector, can be more accurately described as unavoidable measures rather than strategic policy choices. The state simply could no longer afford to subsidize industrial enterprises, or at least no longer wished to do so, so it simply told the bulk of the enterprises to find a way to become profitable or else risk being shut down.

These reforms do not appear to be the result of a conscious desire to limit worker involvement — more a move of necessity and essential cost-cutting in a period of brutal hardship, not to mention that, as stated above, worker control is still existing in the DPRK. Regardless of your opinions on the DPRK, principled Marxists should study this experiment well and take whatever lessons we can from it. It's fair to say a universal system of workplace democracy, linked to the state, would look very similar to this one. I could go into more detail on the DPRK's accurate depiction of racial terror in the United States, the many articles that look at the legal system of the nation, the specifics of the country's first "five year plan" from 1957-1961, and a page on elections in the country, but I'll hold myself back for the time being.

Understanding Global Orientalism

"And if it does start a war, hopefully people will say, 'You know what? It was worth it. It was a good movie!'"

—Seth Rogen

"Wacky dictators sell newspapers, and magazines—for example, the 2003 Newsweek cover depicting Kim [Jong Il] in dark sunglasses over a cover line that read 'Dr. Evil.' ...But demonization, and ridicule, can be dangerous. At its worst, dehumanizing the other side helps to lay the groundwork for war."

—Donald MacIntyre

Orientalism is the imitation or depiction of aspects in the Eastern world. These depictions are usually done by writers, designers, journalists, major news outlets, and artists from the West. Since the publication of Edward Said's Orientalism in 1978, much academic discourse has begun to use the *term "Orientalism" to refer to a general patronizing Western attitude towards Middle Eastern, Asian, and North African societies. In Said's analysis, the West essentializes these societies as static and undeveloped—thereby fabricating a view of Oriental culture that can be studied, depicted, and reproduced in service of imperial power. Implicit in this fabrication, writes Said, is the idea that Western society is developed, rational, flexible, and superior. Similar to other varieties of racism such as Islamophobia, Orientalism embodies a series of beliefs and discourses that place emphasis on the [apparent] cultural inferiority and backwardness of Asian culture to the western dynamic, which are used to argue that the "ways" of Asia pose an existential threat to the norms and values of a given society, or what was historically referred to as a "Yellow Peril". The prejudice relies upon a series of cliches and representations regarding Asian people and their way of life and in turn positions itself from a position of assumed western supremacy, of which owing to the legacy of colonialism treats both Asian people and those in Asian countries as "problems which must be solved".*

In modern western societies, the most common form of prejudice elites enjoy to highlight is often described as "Islamophobia", a term which has gained viral usage in the wake of the European refugee crisis, the rise of ISIS and the spread of terrorism attacks throughout western nations by associated radicals. A so called "Islamophobe" is said to fear the influence of Islam, contends that the Islamic faith is not compatible with Western Values, accuses adherents of the faith of being terrorist sympathizers and anticipates growing Islamic immigration into the west will led to the imposition of a Sha'ria system on western nations. Regardless of the factual accuracy of what is being said with that, the point is that many feel Islam is misunderstood, misrepresented and many innocent adherents of the faith are targets of unacceptable prejudice. Many westerners enjoy tolerating the faith to signal their own moral virtue, giving its belief system a degree of acceptance that they do not give Christianity, whilst any socially intelligent and shrewd person would avoid openly stereotyping Islam to avoid being placed in the same league as Donald Trump or Britain First. this article isn't about Islam, but the discussion of apparent Islamophobia makes a good starting point. Although Western elites expect tolerance and fair judgement concerning Islam, that treatment is not applied equally across all cultures. Whilst it is true of course that some cultures receive "better" treatment than Islamic ones and more favorable perceptions, there are others too which receive worse treatment, where people can openly criticize that culture without being slapped with the social stigma or accusations of prejudice which come with talking about Islam. My main point here is to talk about what is called "orientalism"- a form of prejudice and crude stereotyping which is socially acceptable amongst westerners and even other "occidental" nationalities, orientalism being prejudice, stereotyping and fear related to asian people.

Orientalism is rooted in a culturalist and western exceptionalist misrendering of Asia, and by extension, the DPRK, of which the Western world perceives the white man's burden as a civilizer and also portrays the essence of a large and "backwards" DPRK as an existential and uncivilized threat to the world. Whilst some will respond by pointing out this obviously does not invalidate all criticism of party rule, the notion nevertheless continues to wield powerful currency in how the DPRK is perceived, judged and thus approached from the western mind. The notion of "Communism" is not enough to invalidate the empirical evidence which shows that the DPRK is treated inherently unequally from the western point of view, a notion which has owing to size and scope, being exacerbated and repeatedly found legitimacy as an output of geopolitics, either in the 19th century or in the 21st.

Representations of North Korea as a buffoon, a menace, or both on the American big screen are at least as old and arguably as tired as the George W. Bush-era phrase, "the axis of evil." Along with the figure of the Muslim "terrorist," hackneyed Hollywood constructions of the "ronery" or diabolical Dr. Evil-like North Korean leader bent on world domination, the sinister race-bending North Korean spy, the robotic North Korean commando, and other post-Cold War Red/Yellow Peril bogeymen have functioned as go-to enemies for the commercial film industry's geopolitical and racist fantasies. Explaining why the North Korean leader was the default choice for the villain in his 2014 regime-change comedy, The Interview, Seth Rogen has stated, "It's not that controversial to label [North Korea] as bad. It's as bad as it could be" (Josh Rottenberg, "Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg Like that Kim Jong Un Doesn't Get the Joke," LA Times 3 December 2014). As Rogen's comments in this interview with the LA Times reveal, the biographical particulars of the North Korean leader did not matter; indeed, one leader was interchangeable for another. Rogen and his fellow filmmaker Evan Goldberg initially envisioned Kim Jong Il as the arch-villain of the film but, with his death in December 2011, simply replaced him with Kim Jong Un. Indeed, one-dimensional caricatures of North Korea flourish in the Western media in no small part because "[w]acky dictators sell" (Donald Macintyre, "U.S. Media and the Korean Peninsula," Korea Witness: 135 Years of War, Crisis and News in the Land of the Morning Calm, ed. Donald Kirk and Choe Sang Hun (Seoul: EunHaeng Namu, 2006), 404). Yet when it comes to Hollywood's North Korean regime-change narratives, the line between fact and fiction, not to mention the distinction between freedom of expression and government propaganda, is revealingly thin. Whether in Hollywood or Washington, the only permissible narrative for North Korea is what Donald Macintyre, former Seoul bureau chief for Time magazine, has called "the demonization script." Not only have the dream machines of the entertainment industry long played an instrumental role within American theaters of war, but also, U.S. officials and political commentators often marshal the language of entertainment—for example, the description of U.S.-South Korea combined military exercises as "war games" and the Obama administration's references to the Pentagon's "playbook" with regard to North Korea—when describing U.S. military maneuvers on and around the Korean peninsula.

For the last 60 years, Washington has contributed to the political isolation of North Korea. It has sought to destabilize its national economy, including its industrial base and agriculture. It has relentlessly undermined the process of reunification of the Korean nation. In South Korea, the US has maintained its stranglehold over the entire political system. It has ensured from the initial appointment of Sygman Rhee and the instatement of non-democratic and repressive forms of government which have in large part served the interests of the US. US military presence in South Korea has also exerted a controlling influence on economic and monetary policy. An important question for the American people: how can a country which has lost a quarter of its population resulting from US aggression constitute a threat to the American Homeland? While the US and its NATO allies have waged numerous wars and military interventions in all major regions of the World in the course of what is euphemistically called the "post War era", resulting in millions of civilian deaths, America is upheld as the guardian of democracy and World Peace.

Nowadays, as elaborated in Daniel F. Vukovich's "China and Orientalism" (2012), other Asian countries like contemporary China are also commonly constructed as a "lesser other" in comparison to the West; a West which must be gradually be pressured into forcing the West's way of life and thought everywhere. Popular opinion elaborates the Chinese regime under a racist stereotype of “Oriental Despotism”, emphasizing their untrustworthiness, evil intentions, lack of humanity, brutality and threat to Western supremacy. Liberal minded individuals and governments scorn China for “human rights”, drumming up highly exaggerated imaginations of “Tiananmen”, “censorship” and “Tibet”. China is portrayed as an untrustworthy, dodgy, dirty, backwards and disorderly nation where sinister businessmen invest in cheap junk which doesn’t last; everything apparently breaks, falls apart, lunges into disorder, disaster and chaos- “don’t buy anything from there”. Such concepts are entrenched by equally misleading portrayals in the media and film industries. It rests on the same archaic thinking that “natural” Chinese thinking and culture are incapable of progress in the way we believe it ought to be and therefore “westernisation” is mandatory”. Even Hong Kong, influenced deeply by British rule, conjures up extreme stereotypes of the “mainland”（内地）, attempting to disassociate itself from the concept of “China” as much as possible. The same is true for the DPRK, only with the West's interpretation of them being even more vitriolic, chauvinistic, orientalist, and racist. Orientalist thinking is an insult to Asian culture, society and tradition. It effectively declares, in every case, that Asian people cannot think for themselves, that they are inherently ignorant of a situation that we have told them is apparently “bad” and therefore we have to paternalistically save them from themselves. How big of an insult is that? “Sorry China, you don’t know what’s good for yourself, so you have to become like us!” To challenge both Orientalism and Sinophobia requires that we stop thinking about the world in Liberal Universalist terms, stop believing the foreign policy narratives of western powers, ignore the media portrayals of non-western states (good examples include: China, Russia and North Korea, despite their glaring flaws), and to think more critically about our own culture and values in contrast to others, as well as to study other nations more in depth. Orientalism is not a conspiracy, but rather a subconscious bias stemming from a lack of attempts to think outside the box. To assume that the DPRK "regime" is evil or immoral just because it doesn’t subscribe to Western notions of democracy is wrong, because it is built on a popular western stereotypes of “Oriental Despotism” which carries heavy political biases.

In the eyes of [some] Hong Kongers (in this case, those which I am referring to here actively make efforts to separate themselves from being “Chinese”), those described as “Chinese” are jettisoned as dirty, unruly, foul, unsophisticated and even criminal. Hong Kong itself is routinely portrayed as the victim of a mainland conspiracy whereby Beijing are continually out to crush the city’s “autonomy” and turn it into a 1960s style, cultural revolution backwater; sparking protests, political tensions and even calls for independence. Anyone who dares even sport a positive impression of the Beijing regime with any authority is quickly derided as a collaborator or traitor to the people of the “Fragrant Harbour”. The Beijing government is, in the eyes of [some] Hong Kongers, an evil, alien, untrustworthy and brutal system, they’d much rather - ironically - be under British colonialism again. But even beyond Hong Kong, westerners, moreso liberally educated ones, enjoy taking the moral high ground against China. Whilst they [paternalistically] marvel at Islamic politics, beliefs, and culture, they also love [paternalistically] picking to bits the Chinese system, blabbing on about “democracy and human rights”, reveling in the endless negative hysterical stories pushed by the western-centric media whilst supporting the childish, red-scare nonsense advocated by the very same few Hong Kong activists who are racist towards their own nationality. On this matter, the western media, especially so the BBC, are often packed to the brim with negative, sensationalist and willfully ignorant stories on the matter of China, Hong Kong and Chinese affairs. This happens a lot of times with the Islamic faith, yes and people point it out, but they seem to get off the hook when it comes to covering China. If Islam is portrayed by sensationalist press as something to be feared, then so is China - just without the common counter-arguments you'll see in islam.

These people who are fearful of China do not understand China, period. They view the country through a narrow liberal, western lens. Those who are obsessed with liberal values and claim to be open-minded are not open-minded, because as is often the case with Liberalism, people seem to be incapable of recognizing that other "ways of thinking" or alternative "worldviews" exist or can be tolerated. This becomes the number one methodological problem in perceiving China and the main motivator behind "intellectually" driven Sinophobia. We are not willing to tolerate China on China's terms only on our own, when we assume that a nation can only be "good" or "successful" if subscribes to westernism, we are unconsciously being racist by asserting that our values are superior or triumphant, which is the same mode of thinking which drove 19th century Imperialism. Thus, many seem to be only willing to accept China if it becomes a liberal, western style democratic state instead of ruling a way which is best suited to Chinese culture- May I remind you, history does not have a good track record when it comes to forcing western systems on societies which do not reflect western ways of thinking (Iraq, anyone?).

Moving away from China and beyond the American entertainment industry's insatiable appetite for evildoers, how might we account for the anachronistic place of North Korea as a Cold War foe that outlasted the end of the Cold War within Hollywood's post-9/11 rogues' gallery? With the eyes of the world trained on various flashpoints in the Middle East, what mileage of any kind can be gotten from the North Korean "bad guy" in Hollywood? If American moviegoers might be depended on to possess a vague awareness of geopolitical context, perhaps even to have some sense of the history of U.S. "hot" involvement subtending Hollywood's latest Islamophobic interventionist adventure, by contrast, North Korea, routinely depicted in the U.S. media as shrouded in mystery and beyond comprehension, can be counted on to draw a complete blank. Truth, we are often told, is wilder than our wildest imaginings in North Korea, therefore the rule-of-thumb when it comes to representing North Korea in Hollywood appears to be that anything goes—even films featuring Kim Jong Un's head deconstructing and bursting into flames. Violent spectacle thus stands in for substantive treatment, leaving more complex truths about North Korea elusive. It is worth recalling that North Korea has been dubbed a "black hole" by former CIA director Robert Gates, "the longest-running intelligence failure in the history of espionage" according to ex-CIA Seoul station chief and former U.S. ambassador to South Korea Donald Gregg, and the "Heart of Darkness" in the words of congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (As quoted in Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York: Basic-Perseus Books, 2001) 60; "North Korea's Heart of Darkness," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 23 May 2012, available here).

It's against this backdrop of near-total ignorance about North Korea, a place about which Americans possess great conviction but little knowledge, that North Korea serves as a malleable screen onto which the entertainment industry's fantasies can be projected—fantasies that reflect less reality about North Korea than commentary about Hollywood's own murky ideological substratum.

Contrary to popular belief, a nation is not inferior if it does not subscribe to western ideas. Modern China, much like the DPRK today, although both are outwardly referred to as "Communist States", are in fact very homogeneous in how they are run. The Chinese

Communist Party, much like the Workers Party of Korea, is not an alien, foreign system which originated in Russia (Marx was German) and was imposed upon their people; rather it was constructed in a way very much coherent with Chinese culture - and in the case of the DPRK, Korean culture. Despite all those people who whinge about "democracy", Sino-Korean culture and thinking was never about Western notions of democracy. Sino-Korean politics come from a different worldview, a different set of philosophers, and a different perception of what is ideal in the world- and in the case of China, they deal particularly with that stemming from the ancient thinker Confucius. Based on legacies of his thinking and millenniums worth of scholarship of it which has followed; the Chinese see order, stability, harmony, authority and hierarchy as the core values of emphasis in their society, Not western ideas like "democracy" or "human rights". China has always been about maintaining order and stability- for them the state is not something to be "feared" and challenged (as in the west) but it is a positive thing, like a parent, or a guardian. For them, this is a formula which has succeeded. China has remained together as a civilization state for over 5000 years and created a culture which has been fluently continuous. Although China has been offset by turmoil in the past 200 years, namely due to western interference and ideological upheaval, the dynasties of the Ming and Qing created some of the longest periods of economic and stability in human history.

Deep skepticism of mainstream reporting about the DPRK is an absolute must. A lack of skepticism is shown most clearly by those we see who believe the DPRK is just some grey dystopian nightmare, where every building ever constructed is just a flat facade, where every person is just an actor trying to perform just for you, where you simultaneously must be atheist but also literally believe Kim Jong Un is a deity, where watching people be tortured and shot is just a normal daily activity for school children, where everyone subsists off of rats, bark, and grass. These beliefs are not only incredibly ignorant, but a direct result of white supremacist ideology and orientalism in the West against Koreans. I mean these are people who are so deep into the racist myths that they believed reporting from just a couple years ago that claimed that both drinking alcohol or using sarcasm were made execution-worthy offenses, or reports that claimed both that Kim Jong Un's haircut was mandatory for all citizens and then just weeks later that all citizens were banned from having Kim Jong Un's haircut at threat of execution. The DPRK is to be embraced, not feared; but the systematic dehumanization of both the DPRK and its citizens is effective nonetheless, because their entire knowledge of the DPRK is through sensationalized media images. Many can point out the fact that they believe the DPRK to be an absolute dystopian nightmare, but how many of them have seen photos of the North - not government photos, but actual photos capturing the mundanity of everyday life? It's not like every single photo of the DPRK is from the government (this is a commonly believed falsehood) anyways, so what's stopping people from viewing them? It takes a special kind of dehumanizing to insist that every photo from the DPRK was made specifically to cater to just you, seeing as how it robs this entire country of people of their autonomy.

For principled Marxists, the DPRK is to be met with principled critique, not critique which not only has no foundation in reality; but also has its origins in archetypal Western racism. For orientalists though, the DPRK is to be understood by a set of values which don't consider their cultural position. The Korean people are a wonderful people, and they have suffered a lot: through poverty, foreign oppression and the cultural chaos inflicted by the low points of their country's history; yet they are friendly, open, accepting, charitable, hard-working and tolerant. If there are bad or distrustworthy ones, then remember you get that everywhere, who’s to say I’m going to trust every person in Sunderland just because they’re of a similar background to my own? Orientalism is common, and it is sadly, left unchallenged, but it must be at every angle, from academia, to conversation, and to the media, to be as effective as it is. The people of the DPRK are not a threat and nor is their government. It is easy to again simplify North Korea’s politics into a society that is held together by delusion, “brainwashing” and god-like worship of its leaders, but that is again a western cultural connotation which underestimates the complexity of how politics works. In the present day, North Korea is evolving in ways that are not well realized or understood. Despite being a closed society, awareness and influence of the outside world is increasing. North Koreans do not live in “ignorance”, “wanting to be freed” as some patronizingly assume, but are very much conscious of their country’s situation and difference to the outside world.

It's difficult to reason with those people who just read some headlines or a couple wiki pages and think they know what is best for Korea. I think it is most important to show the real daily lives of people living the DPRK and to give accurate historical context to the plight of Korean independence, reconciliation, and reunification, to serve as loudspeakers echoing the messages of actual Koreans yearning for peace, yearning for their families and loved ones across the division. We are all taught as fact, as if it is just a factual as the earth being round or water being wet, that the DPRK is an unimaginable wasteland, where half the country are in concentration camps and the other half live in the worst kind of poverty. We are not shown or told about the actual policies of the state, merely anecdotes from defectors. As I understand it, electoral politics in the DPRK is collective. Their system builds consensus and unity, not partisanship and division. Every time elections roll around I’ll see headlines claiming Kim Jong Un has gotten 100% of the vote when in fact he appeared on no ballots because he wasn’t seeking any elected offices, so it's really all about creating the perception of one-man rule to justify further aggression and provocation.

These sorts of exchanges mark a common trend in North Korean analysis which concerns a de-facto “dehumanizing” of the people’s perspectives themselves, simply because they may offer views, opinions or insights which challenge our “truthful” view of the world. Those not familiar with sociology and anthropology, and thus the nature of how humans perceive and construct their world, are most liable to making this mistake. Ultimately, the problem lies with liberal universalist ontology. The legacy of such political thought, evolving from Christianity, assumes that there is one undisputable, unchallengeable and universal way to interpret all things and through “rationalism” each human being will inevitably arrive at the same conclusion. Thus, in analysis of North Korea, these assumptions are applied. We assume that all North Koreans must naturally and logically see North Korea “how we see it”, they must know North Korea how “we know it” and thus forth. Whilst I appreciate there are realities about North Korea’s political and economic life which of course give us valid reasons to understand that it is, of course, undesirable in many ways. Nevertheless, this kind of ideological thinking continues to neglect the human element. We are often as to how socio-economic circumstances, human identity and relationships, feelings and other contextual phenomena have a profound influence on how humans think and act in relation to their environment. On that note, many people have a hard time ultimately recognizing that North Koreans may perceive their country in ways which do not always coincide with our views, and seemingly we are intolerant to it too. From my own experiences with North Korean people I find that whilst they are quite aware of the poor socio-economic reality their country experiences and the lack of opportunities owing to political restrictions, they nevertheless understand it and treat it in a benign and sometimes even positive way which we would find incomprehensible. Why so? We interpret North Korea through the shock and horror stories in the media, notions such as human rights abuses, totalitarianism, missiles and bombs dominate our perceptions, for us it is different, terrifying, disturbing, but for the North Koreans themselves? Not so. Because it is home, it is life, it is their country, the mindset is different. They grow up with it, they identify it, they understand it and seemingly, are confined to tolerating it. The experiences for many are not always simplified to starvation or oppression, but simply a "banal" life as how we feel about it every day. As a North Korean, despite the broad penetration of the state into every realm, your life is more than just worrying about politics- you are nor a robot but nor are you obsessed with overthrowing Kim Jong un- because you are ultimately human.

Given this, I have seen how the banality of everyday life in North Korea plays out. I have seen North Koreans enjoying sports, such as football, skateboarding, and volleyball. I have seen North Koreans chatting on the streets like any country in the world, eating in restaurants, children playing together, men sitting having a drink and laughing amongst each other, people getting married. All of these things will preoccupy the minds and thinking of the locals beyond politics, even if it is drummed into them. There is a "normal" side to the country and to the thinking of its people, which is so readily overlooked and so readily dismissed, even to the point we assume a benign opinion about something like Brexit is to be treat with suspicion or contempt. Never forget that the study of North Korea is a complex initiative and is not reducible to miniature cliques about the country's politics based on a specified, political focused view. I run into a lot of different reasons why some comrades have difficulty coming to better conclusions on issues related to Korea, but I think what is most important here and what should be emphasized is that we have no place to tell Koreans how to live, how to structure their governments, how to develop their culture. We are the greatest perpetrators of genocide and imperialism in human history, by far, and have zero right to attempt to lecture or make demands of any oppressed peoples, ever. To attack and slander People's Korea is precisely to attack and slander the Korean people struggling for peace and independence. They would find themselves in complete agreement with the rhetoric of the anti-DPRK far-right forces in southern Korea who have keenly picked up on the mainstream American liberal lines towards developing countries fighting imperialism, to support "the people" (also known as "we want regime change ASAP") and not "the dictator" (aka any socialist state with overwhelming popular support). Statements like these make it blatantly obvious that they have not and do not take into consideration the opinions of actual Koreans who overwhelmingly wish for a permanent peace and the peaceful reunification of their country through mutual agreement, not pressure, not sanctions, and especially not nuclear war. To stand against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is to spit in the face of the Korean peace and reunification movements and their decades long history of struggle. When they spout such absurd rhetoric, it is simply a poorly veiled attempt at advocating for more aggression and pressure against Korea. If they think regime change will come to the DPRK in any other form than a US-sponsored coup followed by a western puppet state to drain the DPRK of its protected natural resources, they are woefully ignorant of the current geopolitical situation, and I do not think they are ignorant of this reality." It is extremely demeaning to ignore the fact the DPRK has had its back up against the wall it's entire existence while simultaneously effectively combating the largest military power in the world. In order for one to think the problems in the DPRK are due to some moral failing of its leaders or obscure notions of "authoritarianism," to fail to support the DPRK because it does not live up to your own personal lofty ideals of socialism is anti-materialist at best and reactionary at worst.

Decades upon decades of heart wrenching pains, families irreversibly broken, brothers and sisters torn apart, millions of innocents slaughtered for the strategic interests of the U.S. in Northeast Asia. The history of the unimaginable terror we have imposed upon Korea for decades can hardly be adequately described in words, and how to go about rectifying such a horrific past is not something being discussed in the mainstream, instead pushing us toward inflicting further tragedy upon Korea via preemptive thermonuclear warfare. What we refer to as “North Korea” draws up remarkable images in Western imagination. It’s a land so distant, so far away and seemingly so removed from our own familiarity that it captures the awe, wonder, intrigue at its "dynastic" rule but also the contempt and prejudice of everyday opinion. Go and ask people about "North Korea" and you’ll hear novel depictions of great, violent, terror, extreme political repression, oriental dragons, an established military culture, and perhaps decorated pottery and mysterious calligraphy. If you dig deeper into people’s opinions on China, you’ll probably hear unpleasant and rash stereotypes such as, pollution, smog, poor quality goods, dodgy business practices and brutal politics. Taking these common stereotypes into account, it is not outlandish to say that people in Western countries as a whole don’t know much about “North Korean”. At best, the country is interpreted through a number of novelesque mythologies - subconscious biases and popular imaginations very much in the frame of what has been described above, most of which are perpetuated throughout media, politics and popular culture. People genuinely think that the DPRK is a of a “backwards” country, and that they’re refusing to engage in a process of “becoming like us” and ought to “adapt our values”- once this happens, we assume they will shake off the chains of the “brutal” and “backwards” ruling "one party" and become a “progressive” liberal democracy, just like the West. This form of highly patronizing and belittling thinking underlines most Western approaches to the world outside of the Atlantic-European sphere is orientalism.

Rooted in European colonialist thinking, Orientalism is a mentality that naturally assumes that nations and cultures of alternate political cultures to those which originated in Western Europe are naturally, inferior, barbaric, backwards and in need of “assistance” by the means of western powers (originally those in Europe, now the United States) to achieve progress. Although “Orientalism” originated as a term to describe Western policy and depictions of the Islamic world and Middle East, its definition has become applicable to numerous other cultures who have suffered from Western political supremacy, not least that of the DPRK. Orientalist thinking demands that “non-Western cultures”and nations may only exist on “Western terms”, portraying those who refuse to comply as morally evil, despotic and deficient to rule, often as a justification to draw up popular support for conflict, military intervention and regime change. It continually attempts to portray global affairs as a sensationalized battle between good and evil, drawing on fictionalized narratives of a morally benevolent west battling against an evil, non-western political despotism that will “challenge the cause of freedom” or “morality” alike- Since the 19th century, such thinking has evolved from a focus on explicit racism towards a more subtle obsession with forcing liberal values on counties of different political traditions. In doing so, the DPRK is characterized not as a nation or people capable of its own voice or legitimate perspective, but in the light of a “moral problem to be solved” by the superior hands and minds of an altruistic west who must “show it the way” and thus “save it from itself”. The discourse examines the DPRK as if it were a specimen in the zoo, to be studied, observed and tamed rather than an entity in its own right. Relentless obsession with the country's ruling party provides an acceptable facade for this mindset, morphing orientalist ideas and the apprehension of the DPRK with Cold War cliches and imagery which further propel the belief that the DPRK's acceptance must hinge on the terms which the west has set for it. Yet this rhetoric works, because the image of Asian people as culturally and socially inferior is baked into the western ego. Popular media has long depicted China and Asian culture as a whole as suspect, dishonest, brutal and greedy. Although the ruling party of the DPRK is often cited as the "true" source of blame, this is again a frontier to give it ideological acceptability which overlooks how the stereotype of the "deceitful koreans" has in fact long predated the DPRK and draws upon it.

Here, it merits considering two post-9/11, "axis of evil" films that move in opposite directions but intersect with U.S. policy in ways few critics have observed: Red Dawn 2, MGM's 2012 reboot of the 1984 Cold War original, in which North Korean invaders vaingloriously attempt regime change on U.S. soil only to be outdone by a pack of suburban American teenagers who call themselves "the Wolverines," and The Interview, Sony's 2014 screwball comedy in which a fatuous American TV talk show host and his producer are enlisted by the CIA to "take out" Kim Jong Un as a sure-fire means of ensuring North Korean regime collapse (Sandy Schaefer, "'The Interview' Red Band Trailer: Rogen and Franco Serve Their Comedy," Screen Rant, September 2014). If Red Dawn 2, described by Wired as "the dumbest movie ever," inadvertently descended into farce by expecting that American viewers would "take North Korea seriously as an existential threat," The Interview, catapulted to unlikely world-historical importance, has become the focus of serious controversy and incessant Western media commentary (David Axe, "North Korea Invades America in Dumbest Movie Ever," Wired 4 August 2012). North Korea furnishes the central villain in The Interview—though, in this case, a rube of a "dictator" who has crippling "self-esteem and 'daddy issues,'" according to leaked Sony emails (Sam Biddle, "Leaked Emails: Sony Execs Scared of 'Desperately Unfunny' Interview," Defamer, 15 December 2014). Yet, in the media-storm around the Sony hacking, North Korea has transitioned beyond the screen into an easy fall guy. At a juncture in which the White House has turned a new page with Cuba, even going so far as to describe a half-century of ineffectual U.S. isolationist policy aimed at Cuban regime change as a failure, North Korea, also long the target of U.S. regime-change designs, risks resuming its old place on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism from which it had been removed, by George W. Bush no less, in 2008 (see Christopher Dickey, "Obama Realizes What 10 Presidents Didn't: Isolating Cuba Doesn't Work," The Daily Beast, 18 December 2014). In other words, at a moment when Cuba stands to step off the four-country list, which also includes Iran, Sudan, and Syria, North Korea, accused of hacking into Sony and issuing terrorist threats over the release of The Interview, faces the prospect of stepping back on (see Amy Chozick, "Obama Says He'll Weigh Returning North Korea to Terror List," The New York Times, 21 December 2014). At this moment, we are thus witness to two radically different dynamics: the prospect of long-awaited rapprochement, normalization, and engagement with Cuba in stark contrast to a war of words, threats of retaliation, and escalation when it comes to North Korea. In reference to the hacking of Sony, which the FBI has insisted can be traced to North Korea—an assertion of culpability that The New York Times dutifully reported as fact despite proliferating assessments and overwhelming opinion to the contrary in the larger cyber-security community—U.S. State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf, on December 22, 2014, laid out an astonishing injury claim, on Sony's behalf, against North Korea: "The government of North Korea has a long history of denying its destructive and provocative actions and if they want to help here they can admit their culpability and compensate Sony for the damage, damages that they caused" (State Department, Daily Press Briefing, Washington, DC, 22 December 2014. Noting that a heavy regime of U.S. and international sanctions prevents direct financial dealings with North Korea, AP reporter Matt Lee asked Harf to clarify what she meant by “compensation”: “‘How could Sony legally accept compensation from North Korea? Is there an exception?’ Lee asked. ‘Because as far as I know, if you’re getting a payment, a direct payment, from the North Korean government, you’re breaking the law.’” See “Reporter Dismantles State Dept Suggestion that North Korea Pay Compensation to Sony,” Free Beacon, 22 December 2014. On skepticism from cyber-security experts that North Korea was responsible for the hacking, see Elissa Shevinsky, “In Plain English: Five Reasons Why Security Experts Are Skeptical North Korea Masterminded the Sony Attack,” Business Insider, 22 December 2014 and Marc Rogers, “No, North Korea Didn’t Hack Sony,” The Daily Beast, 24 December 2014).

Yet missing in this lopsided discussion of reparations and national amnesia is any grappling, on the part of the United States, with the profound human costs of six decades of hostile U.S. intervention on the Korean peninsula, much less the fact that the official relationship between the United States and North Korea remains one of unfinished war. In the mid-twentieth century, the United States, which set the stage for bloodshed by cleaving the Korean peninsula in two with no Korean input in 1945, and by supporting separate elections in the South in 1948, then militarily intervened in 1950 on behalf of its South Korean ally Syngman Rhee (a ruthless dictator, no doubt, but “our guy,” in the parlance of the Cold War State Department) in a war of national reunification that followed. That war, the Korean War, remains tragically unresolved to this day. During the war’s battle-phase, the United States wielded near-total aerial superiority, an index of asymmetrical warfare, to devastating consequences, especially in the North. When the dust settled, an estimated four million Koreans has been killed, seventy percent of whom were civilians, millions more were transformed into refugees, and one in three Korean families was separated by a dividing line that had been hardened by war into an impassable, intensely fortified, militarized border, which U.S. presidents ever since have referred to as “Freedom’s Frontier.” As historian Bruce Cumings notes, memory plays out differently north of the DMZ: “What is indelible is the extraordinary destructiveness of the American air campaigns against North Korea, ranging from the widespread and continuous use of firebombing (mainly with napalm), to threats to use nuclear and chemical weapons, and finally to the destruction of huge North Korean dams in the final stages of the war" (Bruce Cumings, “On the Strategy and Morality of American Nuclear Policy in Korea, 1950 to the Present,” Social Science Japan Journal 1:1 (1998): 57). This memory of ruin, so central to North Korea’s consolidation as a state, registers little, if at all, within the United States where the Korean War is tellingly referred to as “the Forgotten War.” Indeed, few in the United States realize that this war is not over, whereas no one in North Korea can forget it.

Whether they realize it or not, Americans view and naturalize North Korea through a lens that is clouded by the fog of an unfinished war through sensationalized myths reaching mythic levels of comedy - for proof, look no further than [NASA manipulating satellite images to present a "North Korea is falling apart" myth]. In what unfurled as one of the strangest PR campaigns for a Hollywood Christmas release ever, the FBI’s assertions that North Korea was behind the cyberattack on Sony—an intelligence assessment presented without evidence yet framed as self evident fact by the Obama administration said something —highlights the centrality of intelligence as the filter through which we are urged to perceive North Korea and other historic enemies of the United States. It is also worth remarking that the two primary ways that Americans “know” North Korea are through forms of intelligence—defector and satellite, precisely the two types of supposedly “airtight” evidence that then-Secretary of State Colin Powell presented to the UN Security Council in early 2003 as incontrovertible “proof” that Iraq possessed “Weapons of Mass Destruction”. Then as now, information about a longstanding U.S. military target is not aimed at producing a truthful picture about that society or its leadership but rather at defeating the supposed enemy—both of which are actively paving the way to regime change. It is precisely within this haze of disinformation about North Korea that Hollywood churns out films like *The Interview* that walk in lockstep with a relentless U.S. policy of regime change.

With Obama stepping into the role of booster-in-chief for The Interview, we might examine the blurred lines between what both the U.S. President and Seth Rogen have insisted is an issue of freedom of speech and artistic expression, on the one hand, and government propaganda, on the other. The collusion between Sony, the White House, and the military industrial complex, as revealed by leaked emails, merits a closer look. Not only did Obama, in his final 2014 press conference, manage to avoid any discussion of the CIA torture report, but also he gave outsized attention to a film that Sony had reportedly shelved, in effect giving an invaluable presidential thumbs-up for The Interview. With the spectacle of North Korea implausibly rearing its head in the president’s remarks as “the biggest topic today,” the pressing issue of U.S. accountability for torture, with even major media outlets calling for a criminal probe into the responsibility of former Vice President Dick Cheney, former CIA director George Tenet, legal architect John Yoo, among others, was deflected (“Remarks by the President in Year-End Press Conference,” The White House, 19 December 2014; The New York Times Editorial Board, “Prosecute Torturers and Their Bosses,” The New York Times, 21 December 2014). Instead, North Korea was launched to front-page news and Sony’s temporary, arguably savvy, PR decision to pull The Interview was framed, in accordance with Obama’s comments, as a capitulation to censorship by “some dictator someplace" (“Remarks by the President in Year-End Press Conference"). We might ask: what political capital stands to be gained from maintaining a hard line on North Korea, at a moment of détente with Cuba? As hacked emails from the head of Sony Entertainment, Michael Lynton, disclose, Sony’s tête-à-tête with the Obama administration over The Interview must be dated back to the production stage. Having screened a rough cut of the film at the State Department, Sony appears to have queried officials, including Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea, Robert King, specifically about what it worried was the over-the-top violence of the head-exploding assassination scene of Kim Jong Un (played by Randall Park). Harboring no such qualms, the State Department gave the green light.

Asked by The New York Times in a December 16, 2014 interview whether they were frightened by “the initial ambiguous threats that North Korea made,” lead actor James Franco stated, “They went after Obama as much as us,” adding in tongue-in-cheek fashion, “Because Obama actually produced the movie.” Seth Rogen, co-lead and, along with Evan Goldberg, co-director of The Interview, clarified, “They don’t have freedom of speech there, so they don’t get that people make stuff" (Dave Itzkoff, “James Franco and Seth Rogen Talk about ‘The Interview,’” The New York Times, 16 December 2014). Within the space of the same NYT interview, however, Rogen offered a less innocuous account of the production process: “Throughout this process, we made relationships with certain people who work in the government as consultants, who I’m convinced are in the C.I.A.” Indeed, in addition to State Department officials, Bruce Bennett, a North Korea watcher and regime-change advocate at the Rand Corporation, the U.S. military-funded think tank, and a consultant to the government on North Korea, also served as a consultant with Sony on this film. His primary, albeit hardly novel, thesis on North Korea is that the assassination of the North Korean leader is the surest way of guaranteeing regime collapse in North Korea. In a June 25, 2014 email to Sony Entertainment CEO, Lynton, who also sits on the Rand Board of Trustees—an indication of Sony's cozy relationship with the military industrial complex—Bennett implied that a North Korean regime-change cultural narrative, by dint of its politicized reception within the Korean peninsula, might oil the machinery of actual regime collapse. As he put it, referring to his 2013 book, Preparing for the Possibility of a North Korean Collapse, "I have been clear that the assassination of Kim Jong-Un is the most likely path to a collapse of the North Korean government. Thus while toning down the ending [the assassination scene] may reduce the North Korean response, I believe that a story that talks about the removal of the Kim family regime and the creation of a new government by the North Korean people (well, at least the elites) will start some real thinking in South Korea and, I believe, in the North once the DVD leaks into the North (which it almost certainly will). So from a personal perspective, I would personally prefer to leave the ending alone". Although purportedly an expert on the Korean peninsula, Bennett offers an assessment of South Korean receptivity to The Interview that is contradicted by Sony's own internal emails. Fearing controversy, Sony's South Korean division passed on opening the film in South Korea. For an account of how another "axis of evil" film, the Bond thriller, Die Another Day (2002), incited widespread protests in South Korea (see Hye Seung Chung, "From Die Another Day to 'Another Day': The South Korean Anti-007 Movement and Regional Nationalism in Post-Cold War Asia," Hybrid Media, Ambivalent Feelings, ed. Hyung-Sook Lee, special issue of Spectator 27:2 (2007): 64-78). In their defense of the film's creative integrity (prior to the email leaks), both Rogen and Goldberg claimed that their decision to explicitly identify the North Korean leader of the film as "Kim Jong Un" was met with "some resistance" at Sony, yet as The Daily Beast subsequently reported, the leaked emails "strongly suggest that it was Sony's idea to insert Kim Jong Un in The Interview as the film's antagonist" following consultation with "a former cia [sic] agent and someone who used to work for Hilary [sic] Clinton" (Rottenberg, "Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg Like That Kimg Jong Un Doesn't Get the Joke"; William Boot, "”Exclusive: Sony Emails Say Studio Exec Picked Kim Jong-Un as the Villain of 'The Interview,'" The Daily Beast, 18 December 2014).

Less than three months into President Donald Trump's reign, Americans could already, concretely, say that there is a non-trivial chance that the United States could've been engaged in a nuclear war. In the hands of a war-horny bigot like Trump, this well-established, bipartisan narrative poses a fearsome threat of making nuclear war inevitable. It's imperative that we answer these lies immediately if we are to minimize this risk. There are three basic pieces to the West's slander of North Korea — that the whole country is "crazy" and especially dangerous, and that North Koreans are treacherous and untrustworthy. They can't be reasoned with, they won't honor any diplomatic agreements, and any moment they could fly off the handle and kill millions of people for no reason whatsoever. This demands extraordinary military pressure from the United States and allies and may, alas, require us to destroy them. Each of these is a perverse misrepresentation. The claim that they are insane in particular is a terrific example of gaslighting — an abuse tactic where the perpetrator takes steps to make their victim act or feel crazy and then uses those responses as proof of the victim's irrationality, a justification for further abuse. North Korea, by way of context, is bordered on the north by China and the south by South Korea. South Korea hosts 28,500 U.S. soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen, many of them literally amassed at the border with the North. On their east is the Sea of Japan (known to Koreans as the East Sea), and across that is a nation which brutally occupied Korea for decades. The North Koreans are surrounded on all sides by countries that have invaded or occupied them in living memory, and the world's most powerful military is [still technically] at war with them and poised to invade at moment's notice.

This is the sort of scenario that would make any country not merely paranoid, but legitimately insecure. In light of U.S. military aggression against countries that choose to resist our global order — see Iraq, Libya, Syria, etc. — North Korea can choose to capitulate or focus tremendous resources on building up their defensive capabilities - if North Korea is "crazy" for its militarism, then the United States is downright certifiable. U.S. propaganda can dismiss North Korea's legitimate concerns so easily because of the underlying racist assumption that these are bizarre and simple-minded people that believe in things like unicorns. This feeds off of and into orientalist logic that sees East Asians as a nearly subhuman "other" that can't be reasoned with and so must be handled with force: it worked when we needed to justify violence against immigrant laborers in the 19th century and it works to justify our imperialist aggression today. As for claims about North Korea's unique danger to the world, this too is divorced from reality. The country has no meaningful power projection capability — its naval surface vessels can't operate more than about 50 kilometers off the coast — and the U.S. military has them contained to the south. China is still North Korea's ally and does not view it as a significant military threat. The North is contained. But what about those missiles and nukes? The North Koreans could maybe lob a missile at Japan — or maybe not, a missile test on April 15, 2017 failed — and they could level Seoul with artillery alone. But why would they ever do this? The only way to explain such a unilateral assault on any of their neighbors — which would prompt either U.S. or Chinese military assets to overwhelm and destroy them — is to go back to that same baseless "crazy" claim. They could miscalculate of course, but claims that they are especially dangerous almost always rely upon the assumption that they might just wig out and bomb everybody for no reason at all at any moment. So if North Korea's military threat is totally derived from their desire to preclude a US attack why not negotiate a peace between our country and theirs? If they had that sort of assurance we could both back away from the brink and perhaps even provide space for an opening in North Korean society. The fact is that America set such a low priority on disarming North Korea because it isn't dangerous to the United States because it have nukes. The North Koreans are dangerous because they refuse to submit to our imperial authority and play ball with our global order. Notice how much less hand-wringing you hear about Pakistan, even though it does have a nuclear arsenal probably 15 times the size of North Korea's, while also actively collaborating with jihadists. The Pakistanis are subject to the U.S. empire, however, and they buy their weapons from the U.S. military-industrial complex, so they are no big deal. North Korea dares to not only maintain its independence, but to defend it by any means necessary. It can't be rewarded with negotiation. America has to destroy North Korea to teach the rest of the world a lesson, and this means preparing the U.S. public for nuclear war, painting the country as a bunch of war-crazed military aggressors whose word can't be trusted.

Perhaps none of this should come as a surprise. Hollywood, after all, has given us Black Hawk Down, Zero Dark Thirty, Argo, and other propaganda films. Yet it runs counter to a reading of The Interview as harmless entertainment, much less as a matter of freedom of speech or pure artistic expression. It might also remind us that culture, when it comes to U.S. enemies, has always been a terrain of manipulation and war. During the Korean War's hot-fighting phase, the United States dropped a staggering 2.5 billion propaganda leaflets on North Korea as part of its psy-war "hearts and minds" operations. Throughout the Cold War, the CIA, as is well-known, funded American arts and letters in a kulturkampf with the socialist bloc, maneuvering behind the scenes to foster "democratic" cultural expressions that would, in turn, be held up as evidence of the superiority of the culture of American freedom. Today, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a supposedly non-governmental agency established in the Reagan era to do what the CIA did covertly during the Cold War and funded almost entirely by Congress, sponsors and disseminates defector narratives, what the CIA calls "human intelligence," as the truth about North Korea. On this point, William Blum writes: "Allen Weinstein, who helped draft legislation establishing NED, was quite candid when he said in 1991: 'A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA" (see: William Blum, Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower (Monroe, ME: Common Courage, 2000), 180). Central to NED's objectives is the promotion of "second cultural" products about target or "priority" countries, for example, the "dissemination of books, films or television programs illuminating or advocating democracy," as a means of delegitimizing and ultimately destabilizing the leadership of "closed societies" (see: NED, "Statement of Principles and Objectives: Strengthening Democracy Abroad: The Role of the National Endowment for Democracy," NED) In its work on North Korea, NED supports defector organizations in South Korea and Japan, which it mobilizes as an exogenous alternative to North Korean civil society—a second culture whose propaganda can be infiltrated via radio broadcast, balloon drops, smuggled USB drives, and other underground distributional means into North Korea. Although leaked emails indicate that Sony's South Korean division opted early on not to screen The Interview in South Korea, citing an aversion to its caricature of the leader of North Korea and spoof of a "North Korean" accent, South Korea's centrality as a site for a more sinister distribution of the film might give us some pause (see Biddle, "Leaked Emails"). Much along the lines advocated by Bennett, organizations like the U.S.-based, right-wing Human Rights Foundation headed by the self-professed Venezuelan "freedom fighter" Thor Halvorssen Mendoza as well as South Korean defector groups asserted their readiness, even prior to Sony's temporary pulling of the film, to conduct illegal balloon drops of DVD copies of The Interview from South Korea into North Korea. We might note that one of the Korean subheadings on Sony's promotional poster for the film reads explicitly to a North Korean audience: "Don't believe these ignorant American jackasses." Of the film's propagandistic value, Halvorssen, who describes comedies as "hands down the most effective of counterrevolutionary devices"—here, echoing Rogen's cavalier assessment of the film's supposedly subversive potential, "Maybe the tapes will make their way to North Korea and start a fucking revolution"—told Newsweek, "Parody and satire is powerful. Ideas are what are going to win in North Korea. Ideas will bring down that regime" (Josh Eells, "Seth Rogen's 'Interview': Inside the Film North Korea Really Doesn't Want You to See," Rolling Stone, 17 December 2014; Paul Bond, "Sony Hack: Activists to Drop 'Interview' DVDs over North Korea via Balloon," The Hollywood Reporter, 16 December 2014; Katherine Phillips, "Activists to Send DVDs of 'The Interview' to North Korea by Balloon," Newsweek, 17 December 2014).

Revealingly, those who profess to be so concerned about democracy when it comes to the release of The Interview rarely, if ever, consider the profoundly undemocratic implications of Obama's militarized "pivot" toward Asia and the Pacific. Here, Hollywood's North Korean "bad guy" merits critical consideration against the context of U.S. policy, past and present, within a larger Asia-Pacific region in which the United States seeks to ensure its dominance.

Although Barack Obama's foreign policy is unavoidably identified with the Middle East where he has continued and intensified Bush's interventionist policies, his foreign policy vision from the outset has been explicitly oriented toward the Pacific. As Obama's Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, signaled the significance of Asia by making it her first overseas destination, bypassing Europe, the customary grand tour destination for her predecessors. Offering a blueprint of twenty-first-century U.S. power designs within the Asia-Pacific region, which he identified as America's "future," "the world's fastest-growing region," and "home to more than half the global economy," Obama, in a November 2011 speech before the Australian Parliament, stated, "Our new focus on this region reflects a fundamental truth—the United States has been, and always will be, a Pacific nation" (Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament," 17 November 2011). As both Obama and members of his administration have taken pains to convey, the United States must be globally understood to be "a Pacific power" (Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," Foreign Policy, 11 October 2014).

Ripped from the script of Red Dawn 2, the bait-and-switch narrative Obama has adhered to with regard to Asia and the Pacific requires North Korea to fulfill a necessary devil-function. Here, it is worth recalling that in 2012, MGM, facing a barrage of criticism from news media in China—not coincidentally the second largest movie market in the world, one that brought Hollywood an estimated $1.4 billion dollars in the year of Red Dawn 2's release—announced it had decided, at the eleventh hour, to replace the film's Chinese bad guys with North Korean villains. North Korea, of little significance as an open consumer market in today's global entertainment industry, could be pasted in as China's proxy, with few financial consequences. Digitally altering PRC flags, military insignia, and propaganda posters to appear "North Korean" would cost the studio well over a million dollars in the post-production phase. Although Obama's policy toward North Korea has officially been one his advisers dub "strategic patience," or non-engagement, North Korea has served as a cornerstone in this administration's interventionist approach toward the Asia-Pacific region. Although an expanded American military role in the region, including a "rebalancing" of U.S. naval forces to 60% (in contrast to 40% in the Atlantic), may be aimed at containing a rising China, the growing U.S. regional military presence, under Obama's "pivot" policy, has been overtly justified by the specter of a nuclear-armed, volatile North Korea.

Not merely the stuff of Hollywood fantasies, North Korea, inflated as an existential menace, has been indispensable, for example, to "the deployment of ballistic missile defenses closer to North Korea," not to mention sales of surveillance drone technology to regional allies (Barbara Starr and Tom Cohen, "U.S. Reducing Rhetoric That Feeds North Korea's Belligerence," CNN 13 April 2013). Indeed, central to the staging of U.S. forward-deployed missile defense systems—Aegis, Patriot, and THAAD (Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense)—in and off the coast of Hawaiʻi, Guam, Taiwan, Japan, Okinawa, and South Korea (including, eventually on Jeju Island) has been the purported dangers posed by an armed, dangerous, and totally unpredictable North Korea to both the western coast of the United States and regional allies in the Pacific. In recent years, this portrait of an unhinged, trigger-happy North Korea has justified the acceleration of the THAAD missile-defense system in Guam, a second U.S. missile defense radar deployed near Kyoto, Japan, the positioning of nuclear aircraft carriers throughout the Pacific, and lucrative sales of military weapons systems to U.S. client-states through the Asia-Pacific region. Albeit all key elements in U.S. first-strike attack planning, this amplified militarization of the "American Lake" is justified by the Pentagon as a “precautionary move to strengthen our regional defense posture against the North Korean regional ballistic missile threat" (Department of Defense, News Release No. 208-13, 3 April 2013). As early as June 2009, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, in announcing the deployment of both the THAAD and sea-based radar systems to Hawaiʻi, explained, “I think we are in a good position, should it become necessary, to protect American territory” from a North Korean threat (John J. Kruzel, “U.S. Prepares Missile Defense, Continues Shipping Interdictions,” U.S. Department of Defense, 18 June 2009). In early April 2013, in a press release announcing its missile defense deployment throughout the Asia-Pacific region, the Pentagon stated, “The United States remains vigilant in the face of North Korean provocations and stands ready to defend U.S. territory, our allies, and our national interests" (“Department of Defense Announces Missile Deployment,” Press Release, Department of Defense, 3 April 2014). Advertised as safeguarding “the region against the North Korean threat,” the X-band radar system, which the United States sold to Japan “is not directed at China,” as U.S. officials were careful to state, but simply a defensive measure undertaken in response to the danger posed by Pyongyang (Lolita Baldor and Matthew Lee, “US and Japan Revamp Defense Alliance to Counter North Korean Threat,” Business Insider, 3 October 2013).

As critics have pointed out, “There is...nothing ‘defensive’” about any of this, least of all the “B-52 and B-2 nuclear strategic bombers,” which the Obama administration put into play in early 2013 on the Korean peninsula (Peter Symonds, “Obama’s ‘Playbook’ and the Threat of Nuclear War in Asia,” World Socialist Web Site, 5 April 2013). Indeed, such “flights were designed to demonstrate, to North Korea in the first instance, the ability to conduct nuclear strikes at will anywhere in North East Asia.” Yet, even as the North Koreans have had to hunker down, with “single-minded unity,” in preparation for the prospect of a David-and-Goliath showdown with the United States, the true audience of the U.S.-directed dramaturgy of war styled as the “pivot” policy unquestionably has always been China. Claiming to have conducted “a lot” of research on North Korea, Seth Rogen has insisted that The Interview holds up a mirror to North Korea’s reality: “We didn’t make up anything. It’s all real.” His conclusion about North Korea after conducting exhaustive research? “It was f--king weird" (Judy Kurtz, “FLASHBACK—Seth Rogen: No Regrets about Making ‘The Interview,’” the Hill, 17 December 2014). Yet, even as the curtains go up in movie theaters across the United States for The Interview, the centrality of the North Korean demon to Obama’s pivot policy within Asia and the Pacific, itself a historic theater of U.S. war, may prove to be far stranger than fiction. For orientalists, it doesn’t matter how many myths you debunk about the DPRK or their people; even if I were to provide a list debunking swathes of information about the DPRK below (I will), some people just cannot be convinced.

Examples of Myths That Have Already been Debunked [List of Links]:

Examples of fake narratives on DPRK that have been debunked:
As is the case with most of these "Top official executed" claims
1 . Hyong Song Wol:
2013 - Kim Jong Un's girlfriend shot by firing squad

2014 - North Korean singer rumored to have been executed appears alive and well
2 . Ri Yong Gi:
Feb 2016 - Kim Jong Un just executed the chief of his own military
May 2016 - North Korean general rumored to have been executed turns up alive at Congress
3 . Kim Kyong Hui:
May 2015 - Kim Jong Un ordered his own aunt to be poisoned: defector claims
2017 - Kim Kyong Hui alive, receiving medical treatment
4 . Jang Song Thaek's execution:
Jan 3rd 2014 - Starved, stripped and Fed to dogs
Jan 6th 2014 - Not fed to dogs- but allegedly killed for commiting a serious crime and attempting escape

Myths Debunked [List of Links]:

- **the haircut**
- **Why do north koreans revere the Kims? Understanding the North korean leadership objectively**
- **Is Kim Jong Un a madman? CIA says he is perfeclty rationale**
- **North korean defectors to the south, say that the vast majority north koreans support kim jong un back in the north**
- **Is DPRK a hereditary monarchy? It is the contrary according to their constitution**
- **What about the people crying in the kim's funerals? Coltural reasons. South koreasn crying over the death of another president**
- **Kim jong un haves a 78% approval rate...In south korea.**
- **Kim jong un and DPRK in 2018**
- **Debunking other myths such as Kim heircut, kim finding unicors, people executed for stupit reasons, e.t.c e.t.c**
- **Kim jong un executing his GF, sending drones to SK, and kim jong un feeding people to dogs, debunked**
- **Myths and misconceptions on North korea, made by debunked, a non socialist account**
- **Lies from truman to trump**
- **The olympics have exposed every US lie on DPRK**
- **DPRK sexual domestic violence? Debunk!**
- **Crimes against humaniry? Addresed, must read!**
- **Can westerners use the internet? Yep**
- **Must read:Evidence that most of lies we hear about DPRK are indeed lies**
- **The north korean purge that did not happen**
- **Wannacry? DPRK invites US to investigate inside DPRK. "Show us the evidence"**
- **Relegion in DPRK?**
- **Smartphones in DPRK?**
- **What about the caste system?**

Traveling to the DPRK

The problem isn't moving out of the country, it's that you need another country to accept you. Here are the embassies in the DPRK:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_diplomatic_missions_in_North_Korea#Embassies

To travel somewhere else, either your country has an agreement, or you need to visit an embassy and ask for a visa. By default, DPRK citizens can only travel to the 25 countries in the list above. Not all of those offer visa services though (embassies should, but it's not a guarantee). There are DPRK citizens living abroad -- some in Japan as they are not allowed by Japan to return to the DPRK --, but most importantly, here's Bloomberg estimating that there are 50k DPRK workers abroad:

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-12-23/north-korean-workers-abroad-under-scrutiny-by-u-s-allies-at-un

And just food for thought - can you imagine if China said the USA had to repatriate their expats worldwide, and there was an international committee to sanction the USA and the US President couldn't testify at this committee? There are also very real material reasons for a country like the DPRK to prevent emigration. Interestingly enough,a Greek journalist resided for two years in the DPRK, and shared her opinion. There is also this interesting photo collection from a traveller who was in the DPRK. Below is a list of eyewitness accounts and travel logs from those who have visited the DPRK:

- A look at life in North Korea
http://avax.news/fact/A_Look_at_Life_in_North_Korea_03-10-2017.html
- In North Korea: First eye-witness report by Anna Louise-Strong (1949)
https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/strong-anna-louise/1949/in-north-korea/
- My trip to North Korea: 13 misconceptions corrected
https://www.liberationnews.org/my-trip-to-north-korea-13-misconceptions-corrected/
- Eyewitness North Korea: An American’s journey to the DPRK before the travel ban
http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/eyewitness-north-korea.html#.WbWO17KGOUn
- An American tourist in North Korea: Exploring the DPRK and running the Pyongyang Marathon
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkN42srizJo
- What we saw in North Korea goes against everything western media wants us to believe - American Herald Tribune
https://ahtribune.com/world/asia-pacific/1883-north-korea-washington.html
- Adelaide student studying in Pyongyang
https://au.news.yahoo.com/a/37230864/adelaide-student-studying-in-pyongyang-north-korea/
- Serbian tourists visit DPRK
https://sputniknews.com/asia/201709121057330168-serbia-tourists-visit/
- Surfing in North Korea
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO4M1U_2bmk
- Iranian Muslims in NK
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLw1v-xQA7I
- Playlist of short clips taken in DPRK
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUoQioU65Mk&list=PLqtiZC-4QZC1gws0TTZSW8SPVSlmW2Oos&index=1

- Tourist who took camera inside North Korea shocked at seemingly ordinary lives of citizens

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2638213/Tourist-took-camera-inside-North-Korea-expected-really-really-sad-people-shocked-seemingly-ordinary-lives-citizens.html

- Gay travellers in DPRK

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/30/business/how-to-plan-a-safe-trip-for-gay-and-transgender-travelers.html

- North Korea in the eyes of Turkey's Socialists

https://medium.com/@bcloud__/north-korea-in-the-eyes-of-turkey-s-socialist-s-c673510e64db

- Visit to the DPRK by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

https://marxistleninist.wordpress.com/2008/11/30/cpn-maoist-on-juche-in-dprk/

- Marcel Cartier: a trip to North Korea

http://dekusada.blogspot.hk/2014/04/by-marcel-cartier-i-had-unique.html

And below this is a list of links concerning daily life in the DPRK:

- North Korea's Economy of Self-Reliance

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70QK9VrGQHQ

- The social and economic achievements of North Korea

https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-social-and-economic-achievements-of-north-korea/5594234

- Here's what it's like inside a North Korean grocery store

http://uk.businessinsider.com/north-korea-trump-store-food-2017-5?r=US&IR=T

- Why Pyongyang is using gleaming skyscrapers to show 'potential of socialist Korea'

http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/cbc-north-korea-ryomyong-street-opening-1.4069982

- No homeless in Pyongyang, says defector

https://www.upi.com/%E2%80%A6/North-Korean-defector-s%E2%80%A6/8801457150974/

- Pyongyang Lessons: North Korea from inside the classroom

https://www.amazon.com/Pyongyang-Lessons-North-Inside-Classroom/dp/148272975X

- Religion in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea?

https://stalinsmoustache.org/2015/06/16/religion-in-the-democratic-peoples-republic-of-korea/

- The Churches of Pyongyang

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qvpHD2M3WM

- Korean Orthodox wedding

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUqGMcMyZgs

- Yes, DPRKoreans have smartphones!

https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/north-korean-smartphone-jindallae-3/

- North Korean architecture

https://io9.gizmodo.com/north-koreas-modern-architecture-an-alternate-universe-1613846991

- North Korea that neither Trump nor western media wants the world to see

http://www.mintpressnews.com/north-korea-neither-trump-nor-western-media-wants-world-see/

- Under the care of the state

http://exploredprk.com/articles/under-the-state-care/

- Pyongyang Sci-Tech centre

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_d39JvG7u8

- Sci-Tech complex in Pyongyang

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4CPqTpny_vo

- Day of persons with disabilities marked

http://exploredprk.com/news/day-of-persons-with-disabilities-marked/

- Members of the Korean Art Association of the Disabled giving performance

http://exploredprk.com/news/disabled-people-gave-performance/

- Photographer claims North Korea worth visiting (beautiful photography)

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4595654/Photographer-claims-North-Korea-worth-visiting.html

- 360 Panoramic views in the DPRK

https://www.dprk360.com/360/index.html

- Incredible album full of images taken around the DPRK

https://imgur.com/gallery/WU4Mb

- Inside the North Korean cocoon (short video montage filmed in DPRK)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCS-W9MFZKQ

- Very large album of pictures taken inside the DPRK

https://www.facebook.com/pg/dprk360/photos/?tab=album&album_id=214475598676276

- Eva Bartlett trip to DPRK

https://www.facebook.com/EvaBoBeeva/media_set?set=a.1664413886901932.1073741908.100000000104830&type=3&pnref=lhc

- Derek Ford’s pictures of his travels in DPRK on Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/ford.derek/media_set?set=a.938928138735.1073741830.41400390

- Inside the secretive world of North Korea’s military (ignore the ridiculous commentary; if taking photos of soldiers is ‘forbidden’ why are soldiers posing for the photographer and how was he able to get them out of the country?)

http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/inside-secretive-world-north-koreas-10210609

- Living With Absences: A Foreigner’s Sojourn in Pyongyang by Hazel Smith (fascinating paper from 2001/2002, so very dated in regards to how open the country is, but a good read nonetheless)

https://www.academia.edu/12701480/Living_with_Absences_A_Foreigners_Sojourn_in_Pyongyang

On Defectors: What is to be Done?

While there is no doubt that the DPRK has committed crimes; some of them serious, others being human rights abuses, there are questions to be asked about how heavily outsiders should rely on defectors' testimonies as credible evidence. Cash payments in return for interviews with North Korean refugees have been standard practice in the field for years. In 2017, South Korea boosted their reward for defectors from the North to $860,000. But this practice raises a difficulty: how does the payment change the relation between a researcher and an interviewee, and what effect will it have on the story itself? This practice also drives the demand for "saleable stories": the more exclusive, shocking or emotional, the higher the fee. Though parts of his story have been challenged by counter-testimony and contradictions, the power of the west's curiosity and the media's desire for a good story cannot be overestimated. North Korean refugees have become well aware of what the interviewer wants to hear. Whether speaking to the UN, US Congress or western media, the questions are the same every time: why did you leave North Korea, and how terrible is it? With the number of defectors reaching 20,000 in 2010, first-person testimonies have become the norm, and have increasingly come to involve younger victims with more tragic, dramatic, visual and emotional accounts.

In an article from the Guardian titled *Why do North Korean defector testimonies so often fall apart?*, the author notes that North Korean refugees, knowing this, have become well aware of what the interviewer wants to hear. Whether speaking to the UN, US Congress or western media, the questions are the same every time: why did you leave North Korea, and how terrible is it? This raises another issue, because in my experience one-on-one interviews tend to generate more exaggerated stories. Although there are ways to confirm information through cross-examination and by consulting multiple sources, these methods are highly time-consuming, while a significant amount of the information disclosed by a single source is simply unverifiable given the fiercely secretive nature of the DPRK toward bourgeois nations like the US. "In my 16 years studying North Korean refugees", the author notes, "I have experienced numerous inconsistent stories, some intentional omission and occasionally, some lies. In one case the breach of trust was so significant that I could not continue my research – not just because it affected my professional capacity to analyse and deliver credible stories in an ethical way, but because it also had a deep impact on the personal trust I had invested in subjects I had sincerely cared about." The author keeps pressing forward: "...many refugees say they feel pressured for defector stories. Ahn Myung-chol, a former prison guard at Camp 22, said people liked shocking stories and these so-called "defector-activists" were merely responding to this desire. Chong Kwang-il, a former prisoner at Camp 15, said the fame brought by media exposure trapped them, forcing them to reproduce a certain narrative. Choi Sung-chol, from the Korean Nationality Residents Association, said the line between small and large inconsistencies was often hard to draw: "Most North Koreans do not worry about small factual mistakes as long as the big picture that North Korea violates human rights is right."

Despite North Korean defectors being known as terrified, shellshocked, and psychologically damaged people, what is less known is the defectors which go against the dominant narrative of Western media. See, for example, this tragic story of a North Korean defector who fled to the south - only to die with her 6 year old son after being denied welfare benefits. Or what about the woman who defected to the South, but upon realizing that the south does not cover housing, and medical treatment, wants to go back to the DPRK and her family, but isn't allowed to do so by the South? Or the dozens of other defectors which want to return to the North? The 2 defectors who want to go back? The South's hidden issue with defectors committing suicide? The defector who escaped, only to go back home, referring to the South as a "capitalist hellhole"? The amount of stories are just as endless as the stories which depict the DPRK as a hellhole are. Below, you can see a list of links further detailing bunk defector narratives and less well known defector narratives:

  - North korea lies and truth part 1
  - North korea lies and truth part 2
  - North korea lies and truth part 3
  - Shing dong hyuk exposed
  - Yeonmi park: A proven liar
  - Yeonmi park: the defector who fooled the world
- This dramatic NK soldier who defected in the south, which the evil soldiers of the DPRK dared to shoot who turned out to be a murderer. This is why he defected
- Cash incentives and the western media's endless appetite for shocking stories encourage refugees to exaggerate, Jiyoung Song argues
- Shin dong hyuk recalls parts of his story after father appears in tv
- Swiss-born businessman who lived and worked in North Korea for seven years until 2009, he has frequently questioned media portrayals of the human rights situation in the country.
- 12 North korean waitresses kidnapped by seoul spy agency
- loyal citizens to Pyongyang
- Defectors suffer in dept
- "I feel uneasy living in the Republic of Korea as I believe people's hearts, not money should be prioritized. My desire to go to the North will not be changed even if the South gives me gold."
- Defectors treated like dirt
- "Everything I said on TV was scripted ... to make North Koreans look barbaric, ignorant and stupid."
- South korea rejects defectors request to go back to north
- North korean defector proud of nuclear weapons, says kim would rather die than give up
- North korea defector to the south, arrested from praising kim jong un
- South korea intelligence agencies lure people from the north to defect
- Couple re-defects in dprk after they were cheated to go to south korea
- "Even though North Korea is poorer, I felt more free there. Neighbours and people help each other and depend on each other."
- I wanted to stay in North Korea: American
- After fleeing DPRK, some defectors want to go back
- South's hidden problem: Suicidal defectors
- North korean defector interrupts UN human rights event, pleads to go back to DPRK

Let us be very clear: we who understand and critically support the DPRK from a materialist perspective (sometimes referred to as "tankies") don’t actually believe that the DPRK is a “workers paradise” or that they’re “doing nothing wrong”. Although many do use that phrase for effect (this is the internet, remember), we believe that Kim il-Sung and Kim Jong-il were committed socialists who, despite their mistakes, did much more for their country than bourgeois politicians in the US who critique the DPRK from abroad, and that they haven’t (or aren’t) being judged according to the same standard as bourgeois politicians. People call this “whataboutism”, but I think the opposite is the case. If people are going to make veiled comparisons, we have the right to answer with open ones - and what you see above is just that. Countering lists of defectors from the DPRK with something negative to say with defectors from the DPRK with something positive to say is only playing into the hands of liberal eclecticism. Recognize this. What is done here in this section is judging defectors from the DPRK with something positive to say about it by the very same metric as those who defect and have negative things to say.

The Korean Economy & The Myth of Collapse

The DPRK is said to be an economist's nightmare. There are almost no reliable statistics available, making any analysis speculative at best. The few usable figures that we have, though, fly in the face of the media's curious insistence on a looming collapse. Food production and trade volumes indicate that the DPRK has largely recovered from the economic catastrophe of the 1990s. Indeed, Pyongyang's reported rising budget figures appear more plausible than Seoul's pessimistic politicized estimates. Obviously, sanctions, while damaging, have failed to nail the country down. There is hardly an economy in the world that is as little understood as the economy of the DPRK. Comprehensive government statistics have not been made public since the 1960s - and even if production figures were available, the non-convertibility of the domestic currency and the distortion of commodity prices in the DPRK's planned economy would still prevent us from computing something as basic as a GDP or GDP growth figure (Rüdiger Frank, "A Question of Interpretation: Statistics From and About North Korea,"*38 North, Washington, D.C.: U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University,*July 16, 2012. Retrieved on April 10, 2014). In the end, this dearth of public or usable primary data means that outside analysis is generally based more on speculation or politicized conclusions than on actual information. Unfortunately, the greater the province of speculation, the greater also the possibility of distortion, and hence of misinformation, or even disinformation.

The dominant narrative in the Western press is that the DPRK is on the verge of collapse (*See e.g.*Evan Ramstad, "North Korea Strains Under New Pressures",*The Wall Street Journal*, March 30, 2010. Retrieved on April 10, 2014; Geoffrey Cain, "North Korea's Impending Collapse: 3 Grim Scenarios",*Global Post*, September 28, 2013. Retrieved on April 10, 2014; Doug Bandow, "The Complex Calculus of a North Korean Collapse",*The National Interest*, January 9, 2014. Retrieved on April 10, 2014). What commentators lack in hard data to prove this, they often try to invent. There is no way, it is suggested, that the economy could ever recover on its own from the combined economic, financial and energy crisis that hit it in the 1990s (*See e.g.* Soo-bin Park, "The North Korea Economy: Current Issues and Prospects," Department of Economics, Carleton University (2004). Retrieved on April 10, 2014). And indeed, though it remains difficult to quantify the damage done by the collapse of the Soviet Union, we know that the DPRK was then suddenly confronted with the loss of important export markets and a crippling reduction of fuel and gas imports. These two factors triggered a cataclysmic chain reaction that severely dislocated the Korean economy. Perhaps the most dramatic aspect of the disaster was the collapse of food production. The sudden shortages of fuel, fertilizer and machinery, compounded by "a series of severe natural disasters" from 1995 to 1997 (World Food Programme. Office of Evaluation, *Full Report of the Evaluation of DPRK EMOPs 5959.00 and 5959.01 "Emergency Assistance to Vulnerable Groups,"* March 20 to April 10, 2000, p.1. Retrieved on April 10, 2014), made the DPRK tumble from a self-reported food surplus in the 1980s to a severe food crisis in the 1990s. We will address the reliability of food figures in greater detail below, but suffice for now to say that figures provided to the Food and Agricultural Organization's (FAO's) investigative team indicate production dipping from "a plateau of 6 million tons" of grain equivalent from 1985 to 1990to about 3.5 million tons in 1995 and less than 3 million in 1996 and 1997 (Food and Agricultural Organization/World Food Programme,*Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of*

Korea, November 12, 2012, p.10.Retrieved on April 10, 2014). Food requirements for the roughly 23 million-strong population were almost 5 million tons (Food and Agricultural Organization/World Food Programme,*Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, June 25, 1998.Retrieved on April 10, 2014). The chain of events left the DPRK no choice but to make a formal appeal for aid to the international community in August 1995.

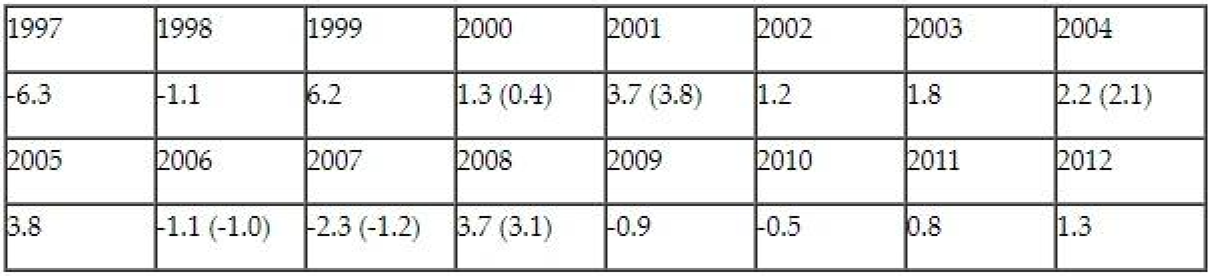
A barrage of sanctions also seriously disrupted and continues to disrupt the DPRK's ability to conduct international trade, making it even more difficult for the country to get back on its feet. Besides the unilateral sanctions regimes that the US and its allies have put in place since the early days of the Cold War (For a summary of unilateral sanctions by the United States of America against the DPRK, refer to: U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control,*An Overview of Sanctions with Respect to North Korea*, May 6, 2011. Retrieved on April 10, 2014), the country also has had to face a series of multilateral sanctions imposed by UN Security Council resolutions in 2006 (S/RES/1718/2006), 2009 (S/RES/1874/2009) and 2013 (S/RES/2087/2013). The bulk of these are financial and trade sanctions, as well as travel bans for targeted officials.

Financial sanctions curtail access to the global financial system by targeting entities or individuals engaging in certain prohibited transactions with or for the DPRK. The professed intention is to prevent specific transactions from taking place, particularly those related to the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, or alleged money-laundering activities. In practice, however, the stakes of even a false alarm can be so high that banks might well shun even the most innocuous transactions with the DPRK. In the Banco Delta Asia (BDA) affair, for instance, public suspicion by the US Treasury that a Macanese bank might be money-laundering and distributing counterfeit dollars for the DPRK destroyed the bank's reputation and triggered a massive bank run even before local authorities could launch a proper investigation ("Breaking the Bank," *The Economist*, September 22, 2005. Retrieved on April 10, 2014). An independent audit commissioned by the Macanese government from Ernst & Young found the bank to be clean of any major violations ("Ernst & Young says Macao-based BDA clean, cites minor faults," RIA Novosti, April 18, 2007. Retrieved on April 10, 2014), but the US Treasury nonetheless blacklisted BDA in 2007, triggering suspicions that it was simply trying to make an example of the bank (*See* Ronda Hauben, "Behind the Blacklisting of Banco Delta Asia,"*Ohmynews*, May 25, 2007. Retrieved on April 10, 2014; John McGlynn, John McGlynn, "North Korean Criminality Examined: the US Case. Part I," *Japan Focus*, May 18, 2007. Retrieved on April 10, 2014; Id., "Financial Sanctions and North Korea: In Search of the Evidence of Currency Counterfeiting and Money Laundering Part II," July 7, 2007; Id., "Banco Delta Asia, North Korea's Frozen Funds and US Undermining of the Six-Party Talks: Obstacles to a Solution. Part III," *Japan Focus*, June 9, 2007). Whatever the case, the blacklisting effectively prevented BDA from conducting transactions in US dollars or maintaining ties with US entities, and caused two dozen banks (including institutions in China, Japan, Mongolia, Vietnam and Singapore) to sever ties with the DPRK for fear of suffering a similar fate (Daniel L. Glaser, testimony before the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, U.S. Senate, September 12, 2006. Retrieved on April 10, 2014). Veiled threats by the US Treasury also seem to be behind the Bank of China's closure in 2013 of the DPRK Foreign Trade Bank's account (Simon Rabinovitch and Simon Mundy, "China reduces banking lifeline to North Korea," *Financial Times*, May 7, 2013. Retrieved on April 10, 2014), and possibly had an indirect influence on other major Chinese banks' cessation of all cross-border cash transfers with the DPRK, regardless of the nature of the business (Simon Rabinovitch, "China banks rein in support for North Korea," Financial Times, May 13, 2013. Retrieved on April 10, 2014). As we can see, financial sanctions effectively contribute to making the DPRK an "untouchable" in the world of money, greatly affecting its ability to earn foreign currency by conducting legitimate international trade or attracting foreign direct investment. Obviously, shortages of such foreign currency have grave developmental consequences, because they limit vital and urgently needed imports of fuel, food, machinery, medicine, and so on, "stunting" both the economy and the general population (*See* Rüdiger Frank, "The Political Economy of Sanctions against North Korea,"*Asian Perspective*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 2006, at 5-36. Retrieved on April 10, 2014).

Trade sanctions also have a more disruptive effect than their wording suggests. Although the sanctions were ostensibly designed to prevent DPRK imports of nuclear, missile or weapons-related goods and technology, in practice they had the effect of blocking DPRK imports of a whole range of goods and technology that are classified as "dual-use," which means that their civilian use could potentially be adapted for military purposes. The result is that the "dual-use" lists prohibit imports of equipment, machinery and materials that are in practice essential for the development of a modern economy, impeding the development of a broad range of industries such as aeronautics, telecommunications as well as the chemical and IT sectors. In his book "A Capitalist in North Korea," Swiss businessman Felix Abt explained, for instance, how a $20 million project to renew Pyongyang's water supply and drainage system fell through, simply because the Kuwaiti investor was concerned that importing the software needed for the project could run afoul of US dual-use sanctions against the DPRK (Chad O'Carroll, "How Sanctions Stop Legitimate North Korean Trade," *NK News*, February 18, 2013). Abt further recalls the role UN sanctions played in preventing his pharmaceutical company from importing the chemicals it needed for a healthcare project in the DPRK countryside.

Given the formidable obstacles, the international press has drawn the conclusion (1) that the DPRK is one of the poorest countries in the world18. But it has also concluded (2) that its misery is almost entirely the result of systematic mismanagement (*See, e.g.,*"Where the sun sinks in the east,"*The Economist*, August 11, 2012 (print edition). Retrieved on April 10, 2014; Nicholas Eberstadt, "The economics of state failure in North Korea,"*American Enterprise Institute*, May 23, 2012. Retrieved on April 10, 2014), and (3) that it will go from bad to worse as long as it refuses to implement liberal reforms. Yet, these assertions, which have been repeated throughout the period of six decades of sanctions, are rarely supported by hard data. On the contrary, they run counter to the little reliable evidence available. If statistics on the DPRK economy are mentioned at all in the Western press, they generally stem from "secondary source" estimations rather than "primary source" figures from the DPRK government. The most commonly used of those estimates are those of the South Korean Bank of Korea (BOK) and of the US Central Intelligence Agency (Mika Marumoto,*Project Report: Democratic People's Republic of Korea Economic Statistics Project* (April-December 2008), Presented to Korea Development Institute School of Public Policy and Management and the DPRK Economic Forum, U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University-School of Advanced International Studies). Yet there are a number of reasons why these numbers in fact are nearly unusable as evidence for the above three claims. First, the numbers are equivocal. CIA numbers do present the DPRK as comparatively poor in terms of PPP-based GDP per capita. The $1800 figure from 2011 would place it 197th of 229 countries in the world, located among mostly African economies (United States Central Intelligence Agency, "North Korea",*The World Factbook.*

Retrieved on April 10, 2014). But as far as the CIA's general GDP figure goes, the $40 billion figure catapults the economy into a comfortable middle position (106thof 229), which is not really what one would expect from "one of the poorest countries in the world.” Moreover, neither BOK nor CIA figures demonstrate that the DPRK economy is going "from bad to worse."The CIA's PPP figure has simply remained stuck at $40 billion for the past ten years. And according to BOK estimates, the DPRK's GDP has been growing at an average of roughly 1% per year in the ten years from 2003 to 2012 (Calculations based on tables in the BOK report for 2012. *See*Bank of Korea,*Gross Domestic Product Estimates for North Korea in 2012*. Retrieved on April 10, 2014). These figures alone cannot prove recession, they would have to be combined with evidence of high inflation rates. This, again, is easier said than done, in the absence of access to something like a yearly and holistic consumer price index (CPI) figure.



1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
-6.3	-1.1	6.2	1.3 (0.4)	3.7 (3.8)	1.2	1.8	2.2 (2.1)
2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
3.8	-1.1 (-1.0)	-2.3 (-1.2)	3.7 (3.1)	-0.9	-0.5	0.8	1.3

Figure 1: BOK estimates of DPRK GDP growth 1997-2012

Note: Figures up to 2008 are drawn from the BOK report for 2008, and those from 2009 to 2012 are drawn from the report for 2012. Figures in parentheses represent those from the 2012 report that conflict with those from the 2008 report (See also Bank of Korea,*Gross Domestic Product of North Korea in 2008*).

Second, these numbers are rarely comparable with figures for other countries, for methodological reasons. Both institutions admit this, and yet many commentators seem to ignore it when they use them. The BOK'S GDP estimates, for instance, are unsuitable for international comparison with any economy except the South Korean one, because they were estimated on the basis of South Korean prices, exchange rates and value added ratios (BOK, *supra* note 24). Meanwhile, CIA estimates are unsuitable for historical comparison, because the methodology it used changed over time (CIA, *supra*note 22). Particularly striking is the sudden and unexplained "jump" from a $22.3 billion GDP figure in 2003 to a $40 billion one in 2004 (Marumoto,*supra*note 21, at 48).

Third, these numbers are actually little more than wild guesses. Both institutions admit that they have far too little data to work with to provide reliable estimates. BOK officials, for instance, have conceded that the paucity and unreliability of price and exchange rate data for North Korea mean that an estimated GDP figure will "by nature be highly subjective, arbitrary and prone to errors." The CIA, for its part, rounds PPP-based GDP figures for the DPRK to "the nearest $10 billion," telling volumes about the confidence with which it makes its estimates (CIA,*supra*note 22).

Four, these numbers cannot accurately reflect fundamental differences between market-driven and socialist economies. How meaningful or useful are the GDP per capita figures of the CIA and the BOK in measuring quality of life in a tax free country with public food distribution as well as free housing, healthcare and education? What do prices or income really mean in such a system anyway? The use of GDP figures is notoriously controversial when it comes to judging the well-being or economic development of a people, and this is even truer in the case of socialist economies. The DPRK does not now participate in global Human Development Index (HDI) calculations, which would be a better measure of development than GDP as it includes life expectancy, education and standard of living variables. The only HDI figures we have now are based on 1995 data, during the famine that followed the collapse of the socialist bloc. Even then, UN data indicate that the DPRK still had an HDI of 0.766, roughly the same as Turkey (0.782) or Iran (0.758), placing 73rdout of 158, on the verge of leaving the medium HDI category (0.5 – 0.8) for a high HDI one (0.8 – 1). See also: United Nations Development Programme,*Human Development Report 1998*, at 20.

Finally, there are good reasons to think that the numbers have been politically manipulated. According to Marcus Noland, executive vice-president and director of studies at the Peterson Institute for International Economics:

> *"[The BOK's GDP estimation] process is not particularly transparent and appears vulnerable to politicization. In 2000, the central bank delayed the announcement of the estimate until one week before the historic summit between South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. The figures implied an extraordinary acceleration of North Korea's growth rate to nearly 7 percent. This had never occurred before and has not been repeated since. Under current South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, a conservative, the central bank's figures imply that the North Korean economy has barely grown at all[32].As for the CIA numbers, suffice to say that they create a completely artificial impression of stagnation by systematically rounding the GDP figure to the nearest $10 billion."*

As we can see, there are very serious grounds to doubt the reliability of secondary source estimates. This is why Noland has called the DPRK's economy a "black hole" and warned against trusting any figure on the DPRK's economy that comes with a decimal point attached. Rüdiger Frank, economist and Head of the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna, concurs:

> *"Too often, such numbers produced by Seoul's Bank of Korea or published in the CIA World Factbook seem to be a curious product of the market mechanism. Where there is a demand, eventually there will be a supply: if you keep asking for numbers, they will eventually be produced. But knowing how hard it is to come up with reliable statistics even in an advanced, transparent, Western-style economy, it remains a mystery to me how suspiciously precise data*

are collected on an economy that has no convertible currency and that treats even the smallest piece of information as a state secret"

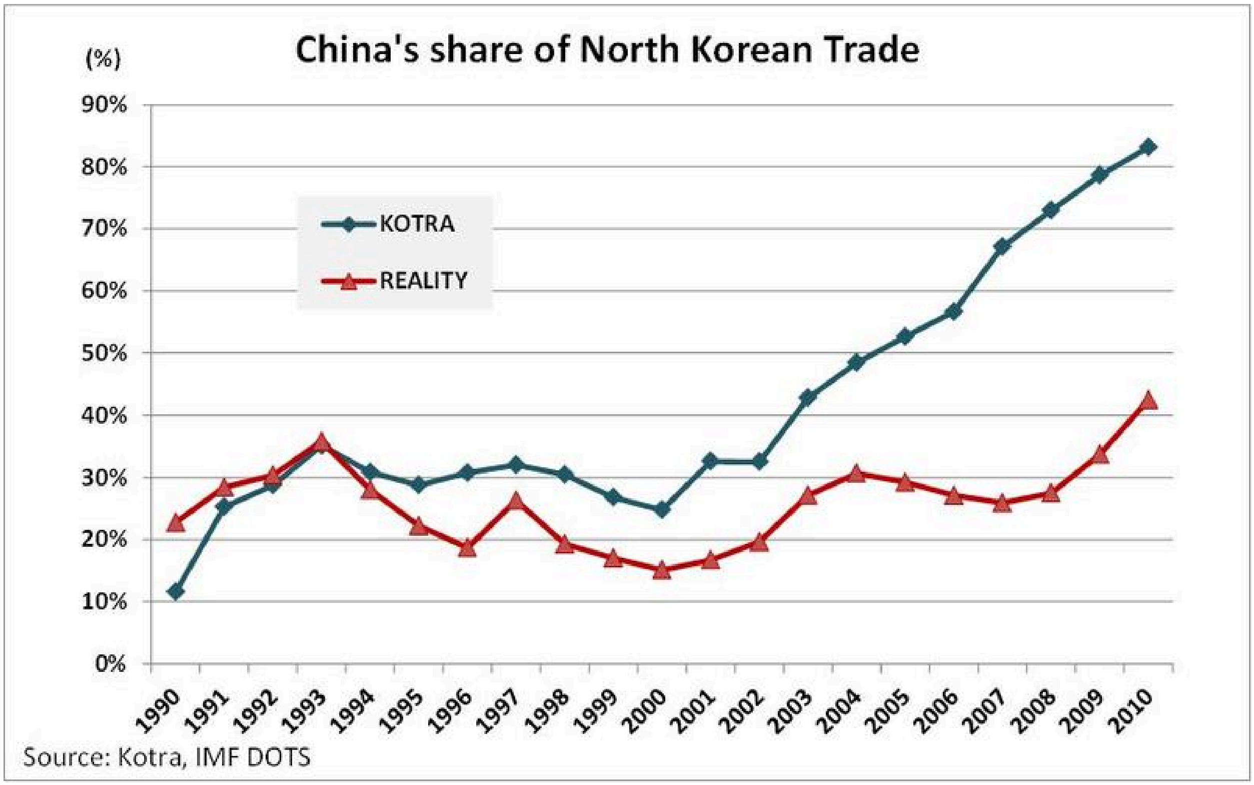
Obviously, this does not leave us with many reliable sources of information to appreciate the state of the DPRK's economy.

Trade

Trade is another area for which comparativelysolidstatistics now exist. Although the DPRK does not publish its trade volumes, data can still be collected through reverse statistics of its trade partners (Marumoto,*supra*note 21, at 58-63). The reliability of an aggregated trade volume figure for the DPRK is thus dependent on the countries for which data have been collected. Unfortunately, it appears that customs offices sometimes make major errors, for example by confusing trade with Pyongyang and trade with Seoul. Reliability thus also depends to a certain extent on the good judgment of the database compilers, especially since many statistics are likely to be simply mirrored from other sources. Finally, it must be kept in mind that sanctions on the DPRK might force it to conduct a substantial part of its trade covertly (*See*,*generally*, UN Security Council Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1874 (2009)), and that a considerable amount of smuggling might be conducted outside the purview of the State, meaning that officially reported trade figures are actually heavily undervalued compared to the real amount of trade conducted by DPRK entities and individuals.

According to an extensive review of DPRK economic statistics by development consultant Mika Marumoto, the most referenced databases on DPRK trade volumes are those of the IMF Direction of Trade, the UN Comtrade and the Korea Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), a South Korean organization (Marumoto, *supra*note 21, at 58-63). There are still important differences between the respective figures they report for the DPRK. In 2006, says Marumoto, the aggregate trade volume figures varied from $2.9 billion for the KOTRA, to $4.3 billion for the IMF and to $4.4 billion for the UN database. According to Marumoto, the discrepancy is largely explainable by differences in the number of countries covered and the conservativeness with which the data is appraised. From 1997 to 2007, the KOTRA surveyed trade with only 50 to 60 countries, while the IMF and the UN covered dealings with 111 to 136 countries. KOTRA tends to be much more critical than the IMF and the UN concerning figures reported by national customs offices, often preferring to ignore them rather than run the risk of including errors. The result, according to Marumoto, is that while IMF and UN figures may be overvalued for recording certain erroneous figures, the KOTRA data are almost certainly overly conservative, for example by ignoring trade with the entire South American continent. Despite all those caveats and differences, the trade data nonetheless remain useful in providing a certain sense of scale.

Another major methodological issue that deserves attention is that Seoul does not report trade with Pyongyang as "international trade." In the complex politics of a divided nation, neither the southern nor the northern government considers the other another "country." They record trade with each other in a separate, "inter-Korean" trade category. The statistics of international organizations like the IMF and UN cannot reflect these subtleties, and thus simply record that inter-Korean trade is extremely low (e.g. $36 million in 2005) or even non-existent, when Seoul is in fact Pyongyang's second-most important trade partner after Beijing, with volumes standing at about $1.8 billion in 2007. Since KOTRA does not include inter-Korean trade volumes, and since the IMF and UN numbers are unusable for this, we have to use the separate data of the southern Ministry of Unification (MOU). Unfortunately, what the MOU counts as "trade" includes transactions that are in fact classified as "non-commercial" and that includegoods related to humanitarianaid,as well associal and cultural cooperation projects[50].Moreover, the trade figures may be further inflated by the way in which the MOU records transit of goods in and out of the Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC), a joint economic zone in the North that accounts for the bulk of inter-Korean trade. By counting "southern" KIC inputs as exports and "northern" KIC outputs as imports, the MOU is actually deviating from standard accounting practice, insofar as it should only be counting as imports the value added by processing in the KIC. Both of these points suggest that the MOU numbers are overvalued, but we simply have no alternative ones to use.



Source: Kotra, IMF DOTS

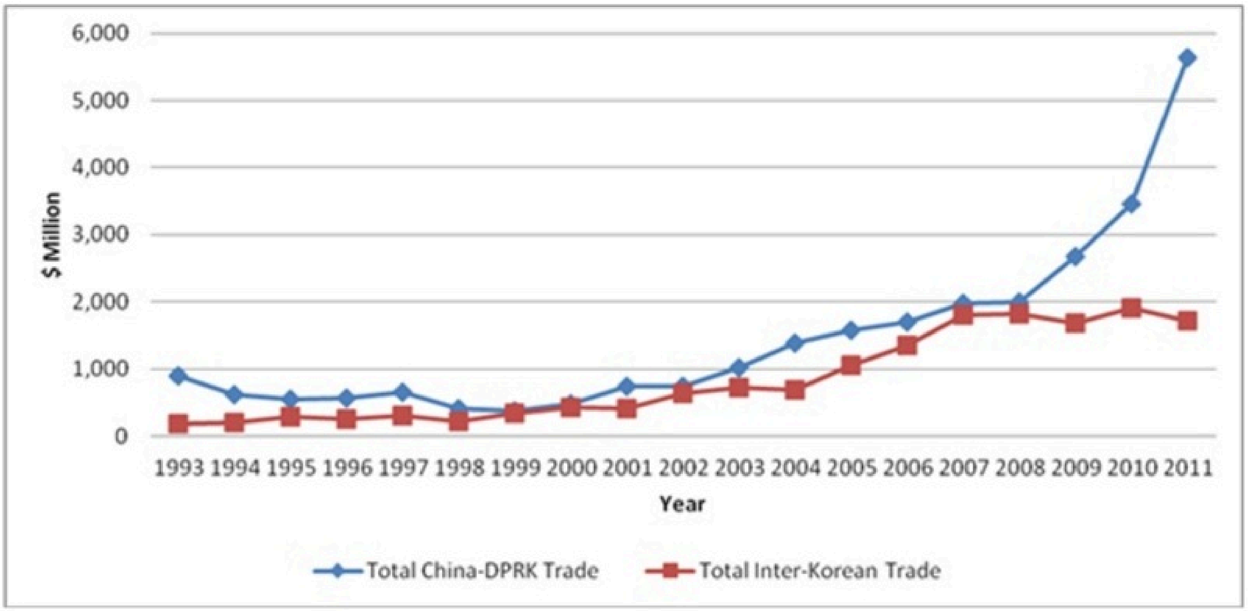
KOTRA and IMF DOTS presentations of the ratio of Sino-Korean trade to total DPRK trade 1990-2010. Graph by Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland

For the sake of simplicity, rather than quote a multitude of sources every time for international trade figures, we will simply use the KOTRA numbers for international trade in tandem with the MOU numbers for inter-Korean trade (except where otherwise specified), bearing in mind that they are respectively under- and over-valued. Southern research databases like the Information System for Resources on North Korea (i-RENK) generally followthese figures and compile their graphs accordingly (See graphs on the i-RENK database. Retrieved on April 10, 2014). Both KOTRA and the MOU are, after all, South Korean governmental organizations. According to i-RENK, the great majority of DPRK trade is conducted between the Koreas ($1.97billionin 2012) and with China ($5.93billionin 2012).Trade with the rest of the world was evaluated by KOTRA at around $427 million in 2012, from which tradewith theEuropean Unionaccounted forabout $100 million,according to the EU's Directorate-General for Trade (European Union Directorate-General for Trade, *European Union, Trade in Goods with North*

Korea). According to the CIA Factbook, the DPRK primarily imports petroleum, coking coal, machinery and equipment, textiles and grain;it exports minerals, metallurgical products, manufactures (including armaments), textiles, agricultural and fishery products[54].Interestingly, even ROKfigures clearly indicate that the DPRK is going through an unexpected trade boom, beginning, of course, from low levels of trade. AggregateKOTRAand MOU figures indicate thatthe total volumes have nearly quintupled from $1.8 billion in 1999 to $8.8 billion in 2012 (See graphs on the i-RENK database). This directly contradicts suggestions that the DPRK is going "from bad to worse."

A further observation that can be made is that Pyongyang is much less dependent on inter-Korean trade as a source of foreign currency than Seoul apparently believed. It is probable that the KOTRA methodology contributed to create this false impression as its statistics systematically ignore most of the developing world. At any rate, when hawkish conservatives came to power in Seoul in 2008, they decided to pressure Pyongyang by using inter-Korean trade as a carrot to control it . This strategy turned out to be grossly miscalculated. Pyongyang simply turned to Beijing, and trade volumes with China soon left those with South Korea far behind. Instead of increasing Seoul's influence in Pyongyang, the confrontational move drastically reduced it, wasting a decade of trust-building efforts by South Korean doves.

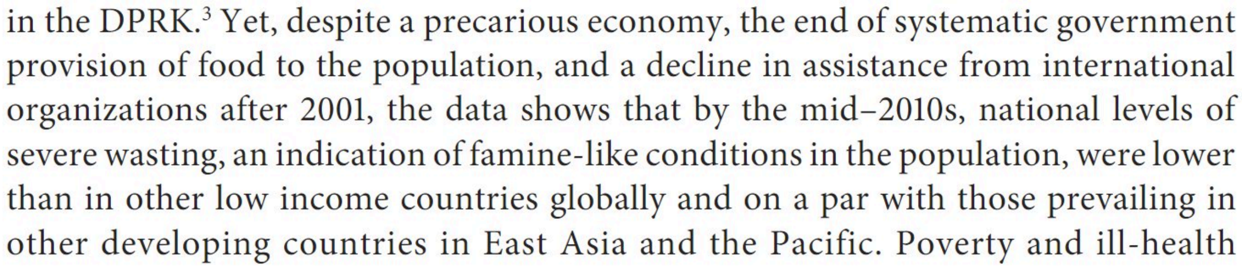
The evolution of Sino-Korean (China-DPRK) and inter-Korean trade clearly reflects the shifting of Pyongyang's priorities and possibilities. Back in 1999, trade levels were still similar —i-RENK graphs show the inter-Korean trade at$333millionand the Sino-Korean at$351million. Thanks to the doves' efforts in Seoul, both trade channels progressed at roughly the same speed for the next eight years, reaching respectively $1.8and $2billion in 2007. But when the hawks took over and tried to take inter-Korean trade hostage, total volumes stagnated at an average of $1.8 billionfor four years, even falling to $1.14billion in 2013, their lowest level since 2005[56]. The politicization of inter-Korean trade by Seoul predictably led to a shift towards Beijing, and Sino-Korean trade volumes soared up to six times ($6.54billion in 2013) above inter-Korean ones. "South Korea," as one commentator bluntly concludes, "has lost the North to China (Aidan Foster-Carter, "South Korea has lost the North to China,"*Financial Times)*." Tokyo similarly wasted its influence when it first banned all imports from the DPRK and then all exports to it to express its displeasure with Pyongyang's nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009 (The National Committee on North Korea, *DPRK-Japan Relations: A Historical Overview*). It should also be noted that the DPRK is left with nothing else to lose, and has continued its nuclear tests in 2013 regardless of Japan's now almost toothless protests.



Inter -Korean and Sino-Korean trade volumes 1993-2011. Graph by Scott A. Snyder

Food Security and Starvation

You've probably heard it before: "the DPRK starves their own people to keep them in check!" It's a very popular talking point amongst Western imperialists, but far too often when pressed on their understanding of the situation of food security in DPRK, it is revealed that they lack any understanding of the DPRK and their food situation in the first place. In order to understand the inherent struggles with food security in DPRK, it is necessary to understand the fact that DPRK's land is nowhere near ideal for agricultural production. Its arable land makes up only 17% of total landmass and volatile weather often forms substantial complications. The lack of ideal agricultural resources is among the largest causes for the major famine in the 1990s. However, it is also the case that the decision to close itself off to the world (with the exception of cases such as the USSR) exacerbated the problem. Hence, the combination of the repeated floods and droughts with the collapse of the USSR created a shock that proved to be disastrous for DPRK. But what's interesting about this was the response of DPRK: it opened up and became less isolationist. This decision runs absolutely counter to the narrative that the DPRK government actively seeks to starve its own population. Furthermore, popular discourse surrounding the topic is often contradictory and self defeating. It is claimed that the command economy is fundamentally inefficient and the government controlling it chooses to let its people starve. But the latter implies that there is enough food available, and that the government simply deliberately withholds it. Thus, according to Western propaganda, DPRK both does and doesn't have enough food to feed its population. In that case, which claim is true? As stated previously, DPRK has made active strides to improve their food security. This has had tangible results; for example, severe wasting by the mid 2010s was lower that other low-income countries and equal to major developing EA nations



in the DPRK.[3] Yet, despite a precarious economy, the end of systematic government provision of food to the population, and a decline in assistance from international organizations after 2001, the data shows that by the mid–2010s, national levels of severe wasting, an indication of famine-like conditions in the population, were lower than in other low income countries globally and on a par with those prevailing in other developing countries in East Asia and the Pacific. Poverty and ill-health

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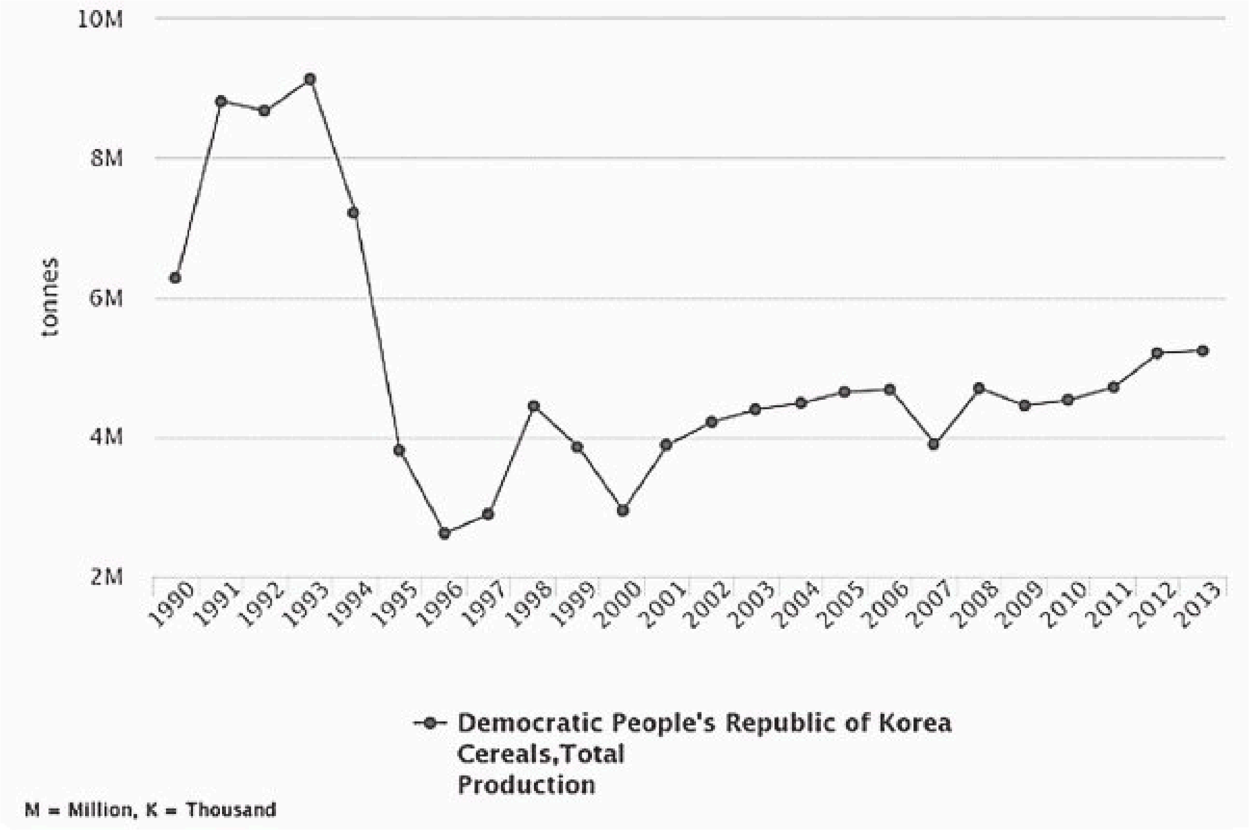
Furthermore, Cereal production, which is an important metric of indication of how well a country can stave off famine, has been steadily increasing since the 1990s famine:



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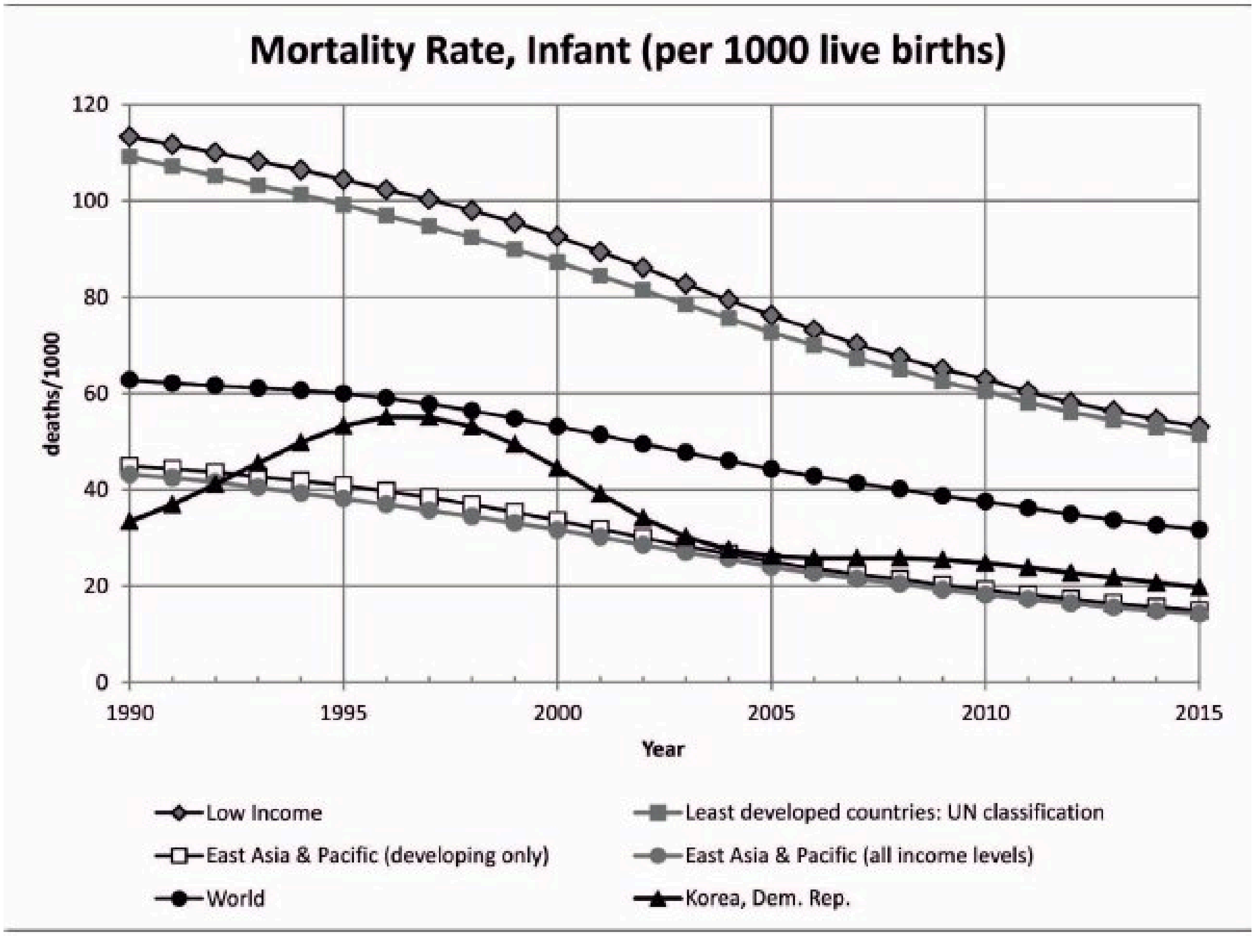
Infant and child mortality have decreased to the point where they are comparable to the major developing East Asian countries. Furthermore stunting (low height for age), previously among the highest in the world, has also decreased to being close to the World average:



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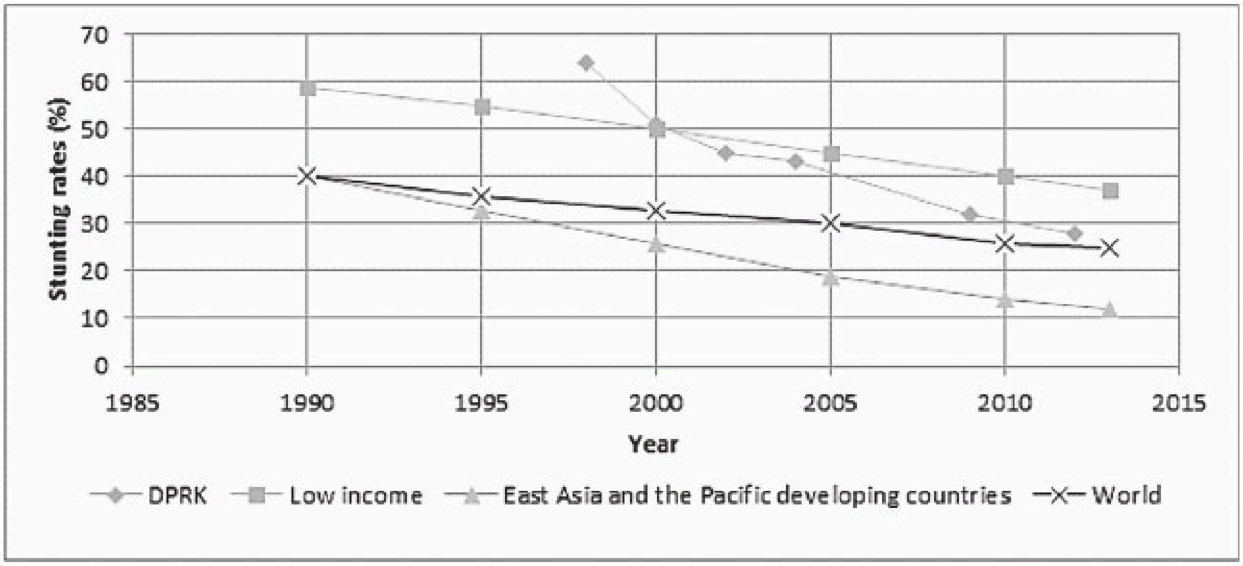


This is a good source for DPRK food security as well

So the question becomes then, what challenges does DPRK face today, and what role does the government play in addressing them? Currently, improvement in food security is somewhat stunted primarily by foreign military threats and sanctions. As previously stated, foreign imports have shown to be crucial for DPRK food security because of a low availability of arable land and poor climate, both issues that persist today. Hence, sanctions hinder the food availability for the average person, in more ways than one. Contrary to popular belief, most DPRK citizens do not get their food exclusively from government sources. Roughly 60% of citizens obtain food from informal markets (장마당). Naturally, this requires money. However, with economic sanctions levied against DPRK, these citizens have had their ability to obtain income (from activities such as fishing) impeded. As it has been noted even among bourgeois media, these sanctions do nothing to hinder the government's pursuit of nuclear weapons, but they do actively harm the country's citizens. With that being said, would there potentially be greater food availability where the government to cease its nuclear arms pursuits and focus solely on food security? Sure. But to assume that this would translate to more food for the population would be to assume that the US government has any intention of ceasing its pursuit of a regime change in DPRK. Sanctions will continue. Military grandstanding near the border of and surrounding DPRK will continue. And ultimately, this reality exemplifies the inherent contradiction in the Western obsession with DPRK's food security. As we speak, the US government actively seeks to reduce food security for its own citizens in reductions to SNAP. The US does not guarantee healthcare as a right. These are decisions that result in the material suffering and deaths of millions. Meanwhile, it spends hundreds of thousands of billions on its military. This point does not exist to engage in "Whataboutism." This point exists to demonstrate the fundamental material differences between an imperialist nation and an oppressed nation. The US has no one to fear in terms of the military. It could eliminate over 40% of its military overnight and there would still be no tangible foreign military threat. The DPRK faces an existential threat via the United States every second of every day. With this put into perspective, the chauvinist and demagogic nature of the question of, "Why does DPRK spend money on its military instead of helping its people?" becomes clear. Furthermore, it exposes the fundamental contradiction in feigning concern for the average DPRK citizen while simultaneously claiming that the country should cease nuclear arms pursuits. Food security depends on these pursuits. The existence of a nuclear deterrent allows for breathing room and enables DPRK to pursue improvements to their food security without fear.

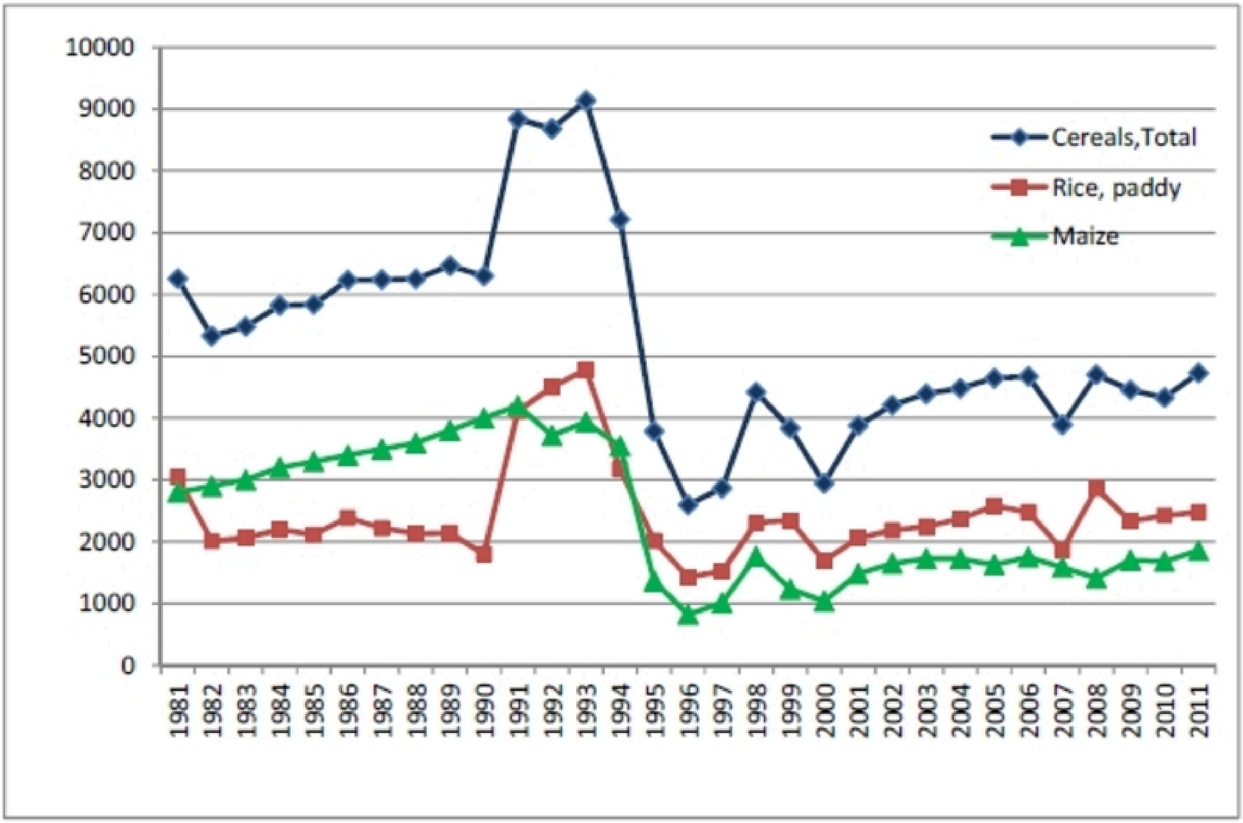
The insistence by Westerners that the bloated US military is justified in the face of poor social mobility, healthcare, food security, etc. and a lack of a tangible militaristic threat, while the DPRK's military is not justified, is orientalist and absolutely racist. Since I fully anticipate that many who read this have or will come across someone citing the 2013 UNHRC commission on human rights in DPRK, I'll also take this opportunity to explain the fundamentally flawed nature of this report. Firstly, this report primarily relied on the testimonies of "witnesses" and "victims," i.e. defectors and "experts." This is fundamentally flawed due to the extensive history of defectors providing information ranging from shoddy to outright fabricated. This means that the report isn't actually based on verified photos, videos, data, official documentation, etc. Despite the UNHRC's claim that these testimonies were "verified" by at least one other credible source of information, the actual citations within the report are almost entirely documents from the UNHCR itself. Not only this, but it shies away from referencing material from UN agencies that specialize in DPRK affairs. As a result, it ends up *contradicting* information from these specialized agencies.

Furthermore, death rate by malnutrition in the DPRK in 2017 was 1.1 per 100,000 people, putting it lower than that of France, Mexico or Brazil. In a study by 38 North, we find that there is no conclusive evidence that North Korea's food situation is out of the ordinary.

The rare usable statistics indicate that the DPRK has, against all odds and expectations, managed to get back on its feet, and is now poised to reach new heights. As we will see, food production appears to have nearly recovered to self-sufficiency, which should bring increased labor productivity and life expectancy. Food production is one of a few areas for which decent statistics are publicly available. When the DPRK first called for food aid in the 1990s, it agreed to cooperate with inspectors from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in drafting an annual report for the donor community, the "Crop and Food Security Assessment Report" (CFSAR). There is a growing consensus that this cooperation makes the CFSAR a reasonably solid estimate of food production in the DPRK. According to Randall Ireson, consultant on rural and agricultural development issues in Asia:

> *"Like all reports on North Korea, theCFSA are by no means perfect, but we have come a long way from the 1990s when for most reports, any precision after the first digit represented a wild guess. While there are certainly errors in the estimates, the reports have benefited from the use of a consistent methodology over many years and improved cooperation from DPRK authorities. Moreover, since 2011, the assessment teams have included international Korean-speaking members, and since last year, they have been able to take sample crop cuttings from selected fields as a cross check against farm production reports. [...] The mission used official data provided by the government, but adjusted those data based on ground observations and satellite information"*

According to a 2014 CFSAR, the food production for the year 2012 to 2013 was 5.07 mMT of grain equivalent. This corresponds to 95% of the estimated grain requirement of the DPRK for that year. Note that this figure does not mean malnutrition has been fully eradicated, especially among vulnerable groups. The estimate refers solely to an average grain requirement of 1640 kcal/day per person (174 kg of grain equivalent per year), excluding 400 kcal/day and other nutrient needs (e.g. protein) to be covered with non-cereal food sources. Moreover, the figure does not address the issue of distribution. But even though these are important caveats, seeing self-sufficiency within grasp remains a major cause of optimism, especially when the current 5.07 mMT figure is compared to the 3 mMT of the late 1990s. Provided that appropriate reforms are made and effectively implemented, it may be only a matter of time before the DPRK returns to the 6 million tons plateau it reported for the late 1980s.

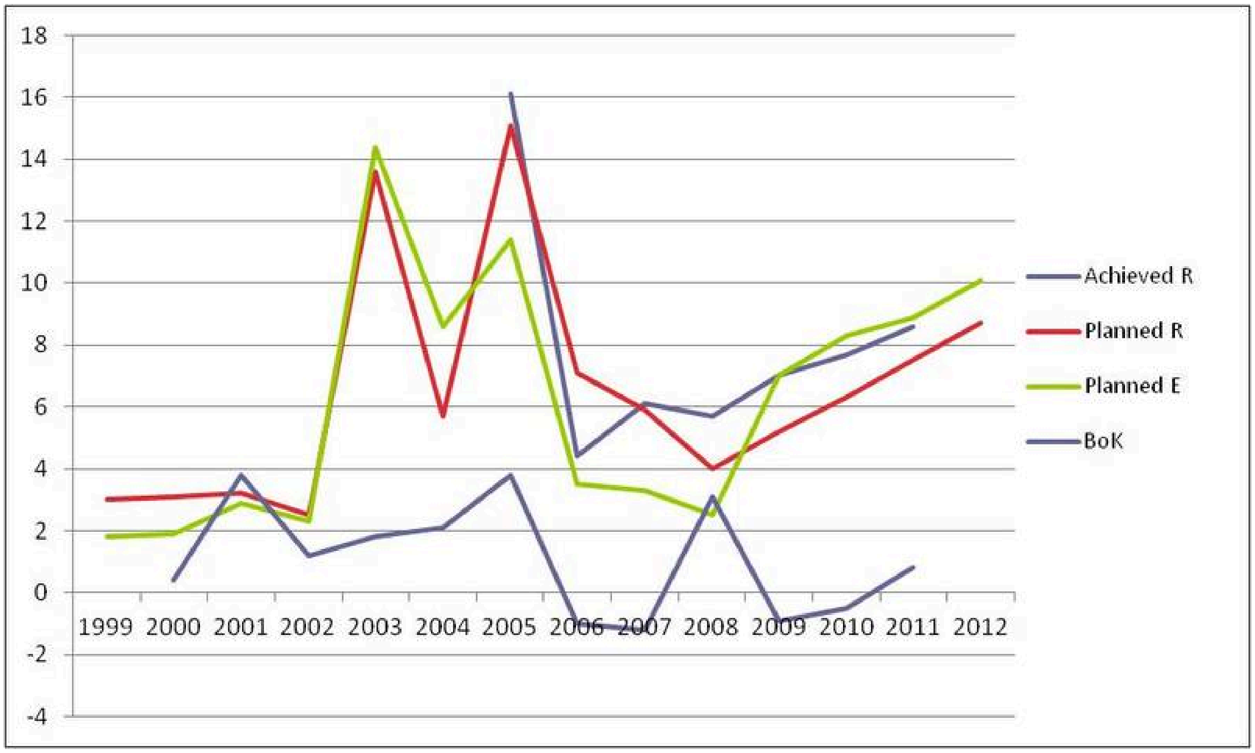


DPRK Cereal Production 1981-2011 (per thousand metric tonnes). Source: FAO

Budget

Having established that the DPRK is probably close to food self-sufficiency and is experiencing a trade boom, we can consider primary sources from the DPRK itself, such as the annual budget sheets published by the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA). They are the closest we get to official and publicly available statistics on the DPRK economy. Remarkably, the latest ones hint that the DPRK has attained or is about to attain double digit growth. If that proves to be correct, the change would be extraordinary, given what the DPRK went through in the 1990s and continued obstacles such as US-led sanctions. Before drawing any conclusions, however, we must examine the reliability of those numbers, as we did for our other sources. Critics point out that the published sheets are full of blanks, and only reveal relative rather than absolute numbers. Moreover, the achievements cannot be verified, leading to accusations that the projections may be little more than Party propaganda. But according to Rüdiger Frank, who has lived in both the GDR (the former East Germany) and the Soviet Union before the end of the Cold War, there are good reasons to see these figures as "not just propaganda, but rather more or less the North Korean contribution to the guessing game about [the performance of the country's economy." Though Frank cautions against taking the figures at face value, he points out that they do consistently include overall values for State revenue and expenditure – both planned and achieved. He argues that this can, at the very least, reveal the level of optimism and confidence the authorities place in the economy. His analysis of the year-on-year differences since the early 2000s shows that this level, rather than following an "idealized" trajectory, shows credible patterns of response to major contemporary events. There are, for instance, significant drops and priority shifts in reaction to the Iraq War or the DPRK's first nuclear test in 2006. Interestingly, Frank notes a "relatively high" coefficient of correlation of the SPA budget figures with the BOK's GDP growth estimates of the DPRK, leading him to conclude that "although both sides seem to differ about the amount of growth, at least there is some moderately strong agreement about its general direction."

The year-on-year growth of the state budgetary revenue stands out for our purposes, because one can assume it loosely corresponds to a GDP growth figure. We can see, for instance, that the growth of achieved revenue drops sharply from +16% in 2005 to a little over +4% in 2006 – perhaps because of the sanctions for the first nuclear test. Although direct comparisons between SPA and BOK data should actually be avoided insofar as they do not measure exactly the same sort of growth, it is still notable that the BOK numbers also report a sharp drop from +3.8% in 2005 to -1.0% in 2006.



Year-on-year growth (in percentage) according to BOK estimates on GDP and SPA reports on state budget revenue and expenditure. Source: BOK, KCNA. Graph by Rüdiger Frank

Interestingly, however, the two trajectories diverge after this. BOK values from 2008 (+3.1%) to 2012 estimate a dip in 2009 (-0.9%) and a timid recovery up until 2012 (+1.3%). SPA values, however, accelerate by almost a full percentage point per year from 2008 (+6%) to 2013 (+10.1%). Why does the BOK estimate growth to be so weak and erratic when the SPA reports it to be so strong and sustained? There seems to be a world of a difference between the southern narrative of near stagnation and the northern picture of double-digit growth. Of course, we should not get too caught up in the detail of numbers that are little more than wild guesses on the one side and that are unverifiable on the other. But analysing the credibility of each version may give us useful hints on the DPRK's actual rate of growth.

The 2009 Mystery

Consider 2009, when the BOK estimated a sharp dip (from +3.1% to -0.9%) and the SPA presented steadily accelerating growth (from +6% to +7%). There are a number of major events that could help us determine which of these trajectories is most plausible. First of all, oil and food prices fell markedly on the world market that year, following the financial crisis. The price of Brent crude oil nose-dived from nearly $140 per barrel in 2008 to about $40-80 in 2009, and the FAO food price index fell down from 201.4 points in 2008 to 160.3 in 2009 (See the tables on the FAO website), making imports of both much more affordable for the DPRK. Second, trade and financial sanctions against the DPRK were tightened by Security Council Resolution 1874 on June 12, in response to a new nuclear test by the DPRK. However, there was not much more that could be tightened after the 2006 sanctions, besides lengthening the lists of embargoed arms, luxury goods and dual-use items as well as targeting eight entities and five officials with financial sanctions and travel bans.

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Third, meteorological stations recorded "unusually intense rainstorms" in August to September 2009 and an "unusually severe and prolonged" (see also: Food and Agricultural Organization/World Food Programme, *Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*) winter for 2009/2010, affecting the country's agriculture. Unfortunately, the FAO did not draw up an annual report for crop and food security assessment (CFSAR) in 2009, leaving us to rely on information collected for the 2010 CFSAR.

Fourth, a major currency revaluation came into force on the 30th of November, 2009, when citizens were given a certain time window to exchange old currency for new currency at a rate of 100:1, with an exchange cap eventually set at 500,000 old *won* ("N.Korea backtracks as currency reform sparks riots", *The Chosun Ilbo)*. Remaining old one were to be deposited in a state bank, but deposits in excess of a million were to come with proof of a legal source of earning. This was meant to multiply the spending power of ordinary citizens (wages in new*won*coupled with price controls in the public distribution system) while wiping out the stashes of the nouveaux *riches who* had been involved in the shadow economy and who could not prove a legal source of earning, like smugglers and corrupt officials (Alexandre Mansourov, North Korea: Changing but Stable,*38 North*,*Washington, D.C.: U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, May 1, 2010)*. On a macroeconomic level, it would allow the state to reassert control over the currency (curb inflation and reduce currency substitution) and over the economy (discourage imports, stimulate domestic production and replenish bank capital available for investment). Outside observers, however, feared that the blow to private savings and the shadow economy could dislocate the main economy and lead to a devastating food crisis, as much food consumption was reportedly drawn from private markets (Blaine Harden, “North Korea revalues currency, destroying personal savings,” Washington Post). Last but not least, it must be noted that the publication of the BOK estimates for the DPRK's GDP growth in 2009 were published just a month after hawks in Seoul called a halt to all inter-Korean trade and investment outside of a designated special economic zone, the Kaesong Industrial

Complex. As we will see below, there are reasonable grounds to believe that those estimates have been affected by the drama of domestic politics unfolding at the time.

So, how is it possible to justify negative economic growth based on those events? From the BOK perspective, the 2009 dip is due to "decreased agricultural production due to damage from particularly severe cold weather" and "sluggish manufacturing production owing to a lack of raw materials and electricity (Bank of Korea, *Gross Domestic Product of North Korea in 2009*)." Accordingly, the agriculture, forestry & fisheries sector and the manufacturing sector were said to be down by respectively -1 and -3%, compared with 2008. Based on satellite images, the BOK estimated cereal production to have slowed from 4.3 million metric tons of grain equivalent in 2008[75]to 4.1 mMT in 2009. Lack of raw materials and electricity, for its part, could be explained by the difficulty of securing imports because of tightening sanctions and because of the depreciation of the one compared to other currencies in the wake of the reform. The revaluation was also reported in the Western and South Korean press to have wreaked havoc in the economy, as the crackdown on smugglers and private traders reduced the supply of a range of goods and thereby allegedly triggered "runaway inflation" ("New N.Korean Currency Sees Runaway Inflation," *The Chosun Ilbo).*

That being said, there are reasonable grounds to challenge this pessimistic analysis. Concerning the agricultural sector, there are obviously limits to the accuracy of satellite-based estimates. The slashing of oil prices on the world market would instead suggest a rise in agricultural production, given the greater affordability of fuel and fertilizer. And while the FAO confirms harsh weather reports and appears to report figures similar to those of the BOK, the fact that it did not draw up a separate report for 2009 indicates that it did not enter the country that year, and that it might therefore just be mirroring BOK estimates. The FAO CFSAR for 2010/2011 reports that the 4.48 mMT production for that harvesting year was up 3% compared to 2009/2010, meaning the latter harvesting year's production was about 4.35 mMT. The difference with the BOK's 4.1 mMT might be explainable by the FAO's inclusion of winter crops in its figure. This means that, once more, we are confronted with unverifiable figures. Concerning access to imports, it is hard to imagine the 2009 sanctions could have seriously hurt the economy, given that the country had by this time found a range of ways to evade these sanctions and there was not much more to tighten compared to 2006 (Patrick Worsnip, "North Korea maneuvers to evade U.N. sanctions: experts,"). Instead, again, the tumbling of food and oil prices on the world market suggests that the DPRK's two most crucial imports could be secured at more affordable prices, allowing the redirecting of reserves for other needed imports.

As for the currency revaluation, the surprise announcement arguably came too late (30th November) to have seriously impacted 2009 figures on the general economy.The reform did suffer some problems of implementation, as the government publicly admitted ("N.Korea Climbs Down Over Anti-Market Reforms,"*The Chosun Ilbo)*, but Western claims of chaos and unrest (or even of the sacking and execution of a responsible official) were based on second- or third-hand reports of isolated, unverifiable or uncorroborated incidents (*See*"Chaos in North Korea Coverage,"*38 North*, U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University). Note also that the above-mentioned "runaway inflation" reports are not based on holistic CPI figures, but on foreseeable price hikes of selected consumer items on *the black market* (making it unattractive *vis-à-vis* the public distribution system was the whole point, after all). Western beliefs that the shadow economy was so big that any attack on it would dislocate the main economy appear to have been proved wrong in retrospect as prices and exchange rates stabilized after a short period of transition (Meihua Jin, "DPRK at Economic Crossroads,"). Keeping in mind that, in all likelihood, the reform partly aimed at freeing up capital and stimulating domestic production, we would have to compare nationwide production figures in all sectors before and after the reform to establish whether it actually had a positive or negative impact on the main economy. Since we don't have these figures, we cannot really pass a verdict on the reform's legacy. But note that according to Jin Meihua, a research scholar on Northeast Asian Studies at the Jilin Academy of Social Sciences writing thirteen months after the revaluation, exchange rates with the Chinese yuan, prices of rationed rice and prices of rice on the open market all more or less halved from 2009 to 2010, dropping respectively from 1:500 to 1:200, from 46 to 24 won a kg, and from 2000 to 900 won a kg. These figures imply that the turbulent period that followed the reform did not last long, and that prices and exchange rates soon stabilized enough to double the spending power of consumers of rice and Chinese imports. At the end of the day, it does seem hard to use this reform to build a convincing case for GDP drop.

So perhaps analysis of trade figures will help determine whether the BOK's estimated four point deceleration in growth is more or less plausible than the SPA's reported one point acceleration. Regarding inter-Korean trade, the MOU reported that volumes shrank by 7.8% from 2008 to 2009, down to $1679 million (Ministry of Unification (Republic of Korea), White Paper on Korean Reunification, 2013, p.86). And regarding Sino-Korean trade, the Chinese Embassy in the DPRK reports that volumes slowed by 4%, for a total of $2.68 billion (Embassy of the PRC in the DPRK,*Zhongchao Jingmao Gaikuang*). Do these reductions not seem a bit too small to justify the BOK's claim concerning recession? One has to keep in mind that the reduction in the reported value of the Sino-Korean trade does not necessarily entail a reduction in the amount of goods flowing into the DPRK, given the dramatic reduction in world price for food and oil. Also, the June sanctions likely pushed a sizable part of Sino-Korean trade in the grey zone of unreported trade. Note, for example, that Chinese customs stopped publishing Sino-Korean trade data from August to November, so that there is no way of verifying the quantity of goods that crossed the Yalu and Tumen rivers in 2009. Note that this has led the i-RENK database to record Sino-Korean trade volumes at nil during this period, indicating those volumes to amount toto $1.71 rather than $2.68 billion. This one billion dollar difference creates the wrong impression that Sino-Korean trade levels were in free-fall due to the sanctions. Even the above-mentioned $2.68 billion figure likely does not tell the whole story. Moreover, it is hard to believe that the DPRK had not foreseen the outcry its nuclear test would cause in May, and accordingly stocked up on necessary goods long before the sanctions hit it in June. Finally, consider that trying to use trade data to justify the BOK's reported recession backfires when discussing GDP growth for later years. If a reduction of Sino-Korean trade volumes from $2.79 to $2.68 billion could reduce GDP growth by 4% in 2009, where would this leave us for 2010 or 2011, when trade volumes leaped respectively to $3.47 billion and $5.63 billion? Surely this suggests that the DPRK's GDP growth should be substantial at this time. Yet BOK figures inexplicably continue to indicate negative value for 2010 (-0.5%) and only timid growth for 2011 (+0.8%). Would the SPA's revenue growth figures for 2010 and 2011 not be far more plausible in this case, at respectively 7.7% and 8.6%? These considerations leave the BOK's pessimist assessment of the DPRK economy on very shaky ground indeed.

All this makes us wonder about the extent to which the BOK judgment might be influenced by Seoul's political climate. This would not be the first time that the BOK is the target of such suspicions, as we noted above. It thus becomes relevant to point out that BOK statistics for 2009 were published in June 2010, when inter-Korean relations were at their worst since the end of the Cold War. Relations had already been going downhill since Lee Myung-bak – the first conservative president in fifteen years – assumed power in Seoul in 2008. But it was not until May 2010 that Seoul really cut ties, by halting all inter-Korean trade and investment outside the Kaesong Industrial Complex. The precise justification for these "May 24 measures" was the *Cheonan*incident, the sinking of a southern corvette that hawks in Seoul have blamed on Pyongyang. A summary of the report coming to this controversial conclusion had been released on May 20th, with the full report only made available to the public in mid-September. Ultimately, Seoul's accusations failed to convince enough nations internationally to produce unified action. This is neither the time nor the place to review the truth behind the sinking, but suffice to say that Pyongyang proposed to prove its innocence by sending a team to review the evidence (Seoul refused), that Moscow concluded in its own report that a stray mine was a more plausible cause, and that the UN Security Council found Seoul's version too inconclusive to point any fingers. But in the South, the hawks were cracking down heavily on dissent, silencing growing suspicions among doves that it may all have been a false flag operation designed to discredit the opposition. Why else release only a "summary" just when campaigning started for the June 2nd local elections? The government seemed to do everything in its power to control public discourse on the incident, invoking national security to prosecute public critics of the report (or even the skepticism voiced by a former presidential secretary) as libel or "pro-North" propaganda (see also: Barbara Demick and John M. Glionna, "Doubts surface on North Korea's role in ship sinking,"; "Ex-Pres. Secretary Sued for Spreading Cheonan Rumors"; John M. Glionna,"South Korea security law is used to silence dissent, critics say,"and "Netizens question cause of Cheonan tragedy"). In these circumstances, it seems almost too convenient for the hawks that the BOK estimates a weakening of the northern economy, less than a month after doves registered surprising successes in local elections by drumming up support against the trade ban (Blaine Harden, "President's party takes hits in South Korean midterm elections,"*Washington Post*, June 3, 2010. Retrieved on April 10, 2014; Donald Kirk, "At polls, South Korea conservatives pay for response to Cheonan sinking").

To sum up, too little data is available to solve the 2009 riddle with absolute certainty. We do have reasonable grounds to believe, though, that the economy continued to grow during that year, following a trajectory more in line with the SPA than the BOK assessment. Agriculture may have suffered from the weather, but probably benefited from low oil prices. The currency reform arguably came too late to substantially drag down figures for 2009, and it turns out that the doomsday reporting that surrounded it at the time was mostly exaggerated. The new wave of sanctions was foreseeable and probably added only limited pressure compared to what was already in place. Reported trade, though sluggish, slowed less than expected, and this sluggishness was likely offset by low food and oil prices, as well as unreported trade. In any case, if lethargic trade could really throw the DPRK into a recession, it is hard to see why the BOK would continue to report recession and mediocre growth in 2010 and 2011, when trade was skyrocketing. There thus seems to be no convincing empirical evidence to warrant the BOK's pessimism. Worse, the atmosphere in Seoul at the time the estimates were published gives rise to concerns that the BOK may have been manipulated for domestic political purposes. If the SPA's numbers turn out to be accurate, and the trajectory in 2010 and 2011 seems to suggest so, then the DPRK's growth rate ranks among the fastest in the world in these years.

Conclusions on Myths of Collapse in the DPRK

The theory of the "coming North Korean collapse" is a curiously tenacious myth. It is based on little more than speculation, sometimes aggravated by misinformation, disinformation or wishful thinking. Even the dubious and undervalued statistics commonly cited in the Western and South Korean press hardly support allegations that the DPRK's socialist economy is slowly disintegrating. On the contrary, comparatively reliable indicators on food and trade suggest that it is recovering and catching up, despite the extremely hostile conditions it has faced since the 1990s. The evidence suggests that the high growth figures reported by Pyongyang are more plausible than the pessimistic estimates emanating from Seoul. Some changes have been so conspicuous that they could be followed by satellite imagery (See e.g. Curtis Melvin, "North Korea's construction boom"), such as the recent construction frenzy (Jack Kim and James Pearson, "Insight: Kim Jong-Un, North Korea's Master Builder,") that has seen impressive new housing, health, entertainment and infrastructure facilities mushroom in Pyongyang and other major cities of the DPRK (Rüdiger Frank, "Exhausting Its Reserves? Sources of Finance for North Korea's 'Improvement of People's Living'"). Some other changes have been more subtle, and reach us instead through the observations of recent visitors like Rüdiger Frank:

> *"…the number of cars has been growing so much that in the capital traffic lights had to be installed and the famous "Flowers of Pyongyang"—the traffic ladies—had to be pulled off the street lest they get overrun by Beijing taxis, home-made Huit params and Sam chollis, the ever-present German luxury brands of all ages and the occasional Hummer. Inline-skating kids are now such a common sight that hardly any visitor bothers mentioning them anymore. Restaurants and shops are everywhere, people are better dressed, more self-confident than two decades ago, and obviously also better fed, at least in the capital. Air conditioners are mounted on the walls of many residential buildings and offices. Everyone seems to have a mobile phone, and there are even tablet computers.In the countryside, too, signs of improving living standards are visible, including solar panels, TV antennas, cars in front of farmer's houses, shops, restaurants and so forth."*

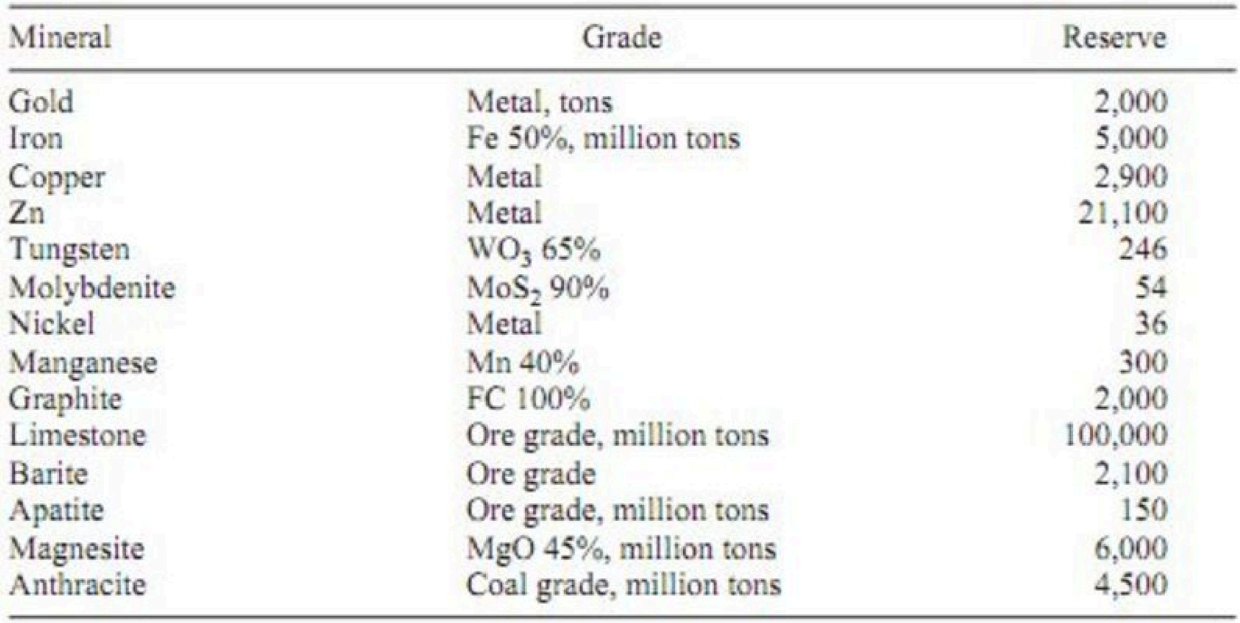
In fact, the question today in informed circles is not so much whether the DPRK is changing, but whether it can sustain this change in the long-term. Frank, notably, worries that the economy is not yet solid enough to justify such an ongoing spending spree, and draws concerned parallels with the closing years of his native GDR. The DPRK, however, has a trump card that may spare it the fate of the GDR – a vast and still largely untapped mineral wealth. The country has literally been called a "gold mine"and there is in fact not just gold, but a whole range of extremely valuable mineral resources in the mountains of Korea (Leonid A. Petrov, "Rare Earth Metals: Pyongyang's New Trump Card," The Montreal Review, August 2010). According to Choi Kyung-soo, President of the North Korea Resources Institute in Seoul:

> *"North Korea's mineral resources are distributed across a wide area comprising about 80 percent of the country. North Korea hosts sizable deposits of more than 200 different minerals and has among the top-10 largest reserves of magnesite, tungsten ore, graphite, gold ore, and molybdenum in the world. Its magnesite reserves are the second largest in the world and its tungsten deposits are probably the sixth-largest in the world."*

South Korean reports have estimated the total value of the North's mineral wealth at US$ 7 to 10 trillion ("'N.K. mineral resources may be worth $9.7tr'," *The Korea Herald*, August 26, 2012. Retrieved on April 10, 2014; "N. Korea possess 6,986 tln won worth of mineral resources: report",*Global Post*, September 19, 2013. Retrieved on April 10, 2014). And this was before the largest so-called rare earth element (REE) deposit in the world was discovered in the north of the country, in Jongju, with 216 MT of REEs said to be "worth trillions of dollars" by themselves (Frik Els, "Largest known rare earth deposit discovered in North Korea",Mining.com, December 5, 2013. Retrieved on April 10, 2014).

To be sure, the experiences of countries like Mongolia, Nigeria and Russia show that it is not so much the presence, but the ability to extract and market natural resources that matters. Choi estimates existing mining facilities in the DPRK to operate below 30 percent of capacity because of lack of capital, antiquated infrastructure and regular energy shortages. And although the DPRK has expressed interest in joint ventures to develop its mining industry, foreign companies appear concerned about the legal guarantees and the general investing environment that the country can offer.

That being said, the government appears to be taking steps to respond to these challenges. It has, for example, supported mammoth trilateral projects between Moscow, Pyongyang and Seoul (the so-called "Iron Silk Road") that could link the Russian Far East and the Korean Peninsula with railways, pipelines and electric grids (See Georgy Toloroya, "A Eurasian Bridge Across North Korea?,"*38 North., Washington, D.C.: U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, November 22, 2013.*Retrieved on April 10, 2014). Once built, the railway could reduce the time needed for goods to transit between Asia and Europe to just 14 days, instead of 45 days by freight shipping up to now, greatly facilitating trade ("Putin lobbies for 'Iron Silk Road' via N. Korea, hopes political problems solved shortly," *Russia Today*, November 13, 2013). The greater and cheaper access to Russian energy should also prove a boon to the DPRK economy.



Mineral	Grade	Reserve
Gold	Metal, tons	2,000
Iron	Fe 50%, million tons	5,000
Copper	Metal	2,900
Zn	Metal	21,100
Tungsten	WO_3 65%	246
Molybdenite	MoS_2 90%	54
Nickel	Metal	36
Manganese	Mn 40%	300
Graphite	FC 100%	2,000
Limestone	Ore grade, million tons	100,000
Barite	Ore grade	2,100
Apatite	Ore grade, million tons	150
Magnesite	MgO 45%, million tons	6,000
Anthracite	Coal grade, million tons	4,500

Estimates of the DPRK's major mineral and coal reserves (per thousand metric tonnes, unless otherwise specified). Source: Korea Resources Cooperation[98].

The government has also taken steps to meet investor expectations through the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Drawing on the Chinese and Vietnamese experiences, SEZs are segregated areas with a favorable legal and fiscal framework specially designed to attract foreign investment. Following the establishment of the Rason SEZ as a model, the government has announced plans for new SEZs all over the country in the past. Besides the construction of the Hwanggumpyong and Wihwa islands SEZs on the Sino-Korean border ("China, DPRK meet on developing economic zones in DPRK,"*Xinhua*,August 14, 2012. Available here. As cited in The National Committee on North Korea,*Special Economic Zones in the DPRK*), it has also been actively setting up fourteen new provincial SEZs (*See* "Provincial Economic Development Zones to Be Set Up in DPRK,"*KCNA*, November 21, 2013. Available here), as well as a "Green Development Zone" in Kangryong and a "Science and Technology Development Zone" in Umjong (State Economic Development Committee Promotional Video, as cited by Bradley O. Babson, "North Korea's Push for Special Enterprise Zones: Fantasy or Opportunity?," 38 North, Washington, D.C.: U.S.-Korea Institute at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, December 12, 2013). Reports indicate that, besides these, even further SEZ plans are in the works. A new SEZ law has also been unveiled, to provide international investors with appropriate frameworks and guarantees (*See* "DPRK Law on Economic Development Zones Enacted,"). The government also appears to encourage companies to approach it for cooperation beyond the SEZs. A good example is the joint venture between the Egyptian telecom provider Orascom (75%) and the Korea Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (25%), which launched the DPRK's first 3G cellular service in December 2008, reaching a million subscribers by February 2012 and two million by May 2013[110]. The zones are the North Pyongan Provincial Amnokgang Economic Development Zone; the Jagang Provincial Manpho Economic Development Zone; the Jagang Provincial Wiwon Industrial Development Zone; the North Hwanghae Provincial Sinphyong Tourist Development Zone; the North Hwanghae Provincial Songrim Export Processing Zone; the Kangwon Provincial Hyondong Industrial Development Zone; the South Hamgyong Provincial Hungnam Industrial Development Zone; the South Hamgyong Provincial Pukchong Agricultural Development Zone; the North Hamgyong Provincial Chongjin Economic Development Zone; the North Hamgyong Provincial Orang Agricultural Development Zone; the North Hamgyong Provincial Onsong Island Tourist Development Zone; the Ryanggang Provincial Hyesan Economic Development Zone; and the Nampho City Waudo Export Processing Zone.

Given this potential – as well as the wider evidence presented in this paper – it makes little sense to continue to insist that the DPRK is heading towards economic collapse. Even bourgeois sources like Bloomberg.com have noted in the past that the Korean economy is growing at the fastest rate it's seen since the 90s. In the past, Reuters has noted that Korean economic growth was at a 17 year high, despite sanctions. In 2017, The Duran has noted that the North Korean economy was "booming". Forbes has said roughly the same. The truth of the matter is that, although slowly, the DPRK is beating it's sanctions out. In the past, defectors from the North have reported that there is no homelessness in Pyongyang.

If collapse ever threatened the DPRK, it was twenty years ago, not now. The DPRK's collectivist system has been astoundingly consistent, and there is no reason to believe the DPRK will be moving away from that anytime soon:

- "Something which most other developing countries would envy" : the DPRK's healthcare system
https://leftistcritic.wordpress.com/2017/06/28/something-which-most-other-developing-countries-would-envy-the-dprks-healthcare-system/
- The real story on North Korea and its healthcare
https://gowans.wordpress.com/2010/07/21/the-real-story-on-north-korea-and-its-healthcare/
- North Korea moving flood victims into new homes
https://www.upi.com/North-Korea-moving-flood-victims-into-new-homes/2691479344309/

- DPRK Healthcare, education and literacy

https://www.globalresearch.ca/north-korea-their-health-system-sucks-do-they-have-schools-and-hospitals-in-america-weve-got-medicare/5604293?platform=hootsuite

- North Korean medical care is good (Jason U video)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9L74NSUEew

- North Korea has plenty of doctors - WHO

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-korea-north/north-korea-has-plenty-of-doctors-who-idUSTRE63T3TW20100430

This also means that there is just as little sense in continuing to strangle the Korean people through sanctions and diplomatic isolation. These have failed to fulfil any substantial objectives to date, be it regime change or nuclear non-proliferation, and will be even less likely to fulfil them in the future, if the country continues to grow. In these circumstances, continued sanctions and forced isolation may not be meaningfully contributing to international peace and security. Marginalization has not only failed to "pacify" the country, it even seems to have radicalized it. It is obvious that the more we isolate the DPRK, the more it will want to develop its self-defence capabilities, and the less it will stand to lose from infuriating its neighbours with its nuclear and ballistic research programs. Better integration into the world community would likely be much more effective in shifting its political priorities.

The DPRK, far from being the crazed and trigger-happy buccaneer it is made out to be in international media, is – like many other countries – prioritizes its own safety and prosperity. Since the country insists on its right to self-determination and has apparently found ways to maintain it without collapsing in the face of international power, we should stop senselessly segregating it and instead help it integrate into the global village, by giving it reasonable security guarantees and establishing mutually beneficial trade relations. There has never been a better time to study the social and economic achievements of the DPRK. This is not about "rewarding" the DPRK, but simply about choosing the ounce of prevention that will be worth the pound of cure and opting for a policy that best serves world peace.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Undoubtedly the shortest part of this document, below there are 4 studies linked, ranked placed in [ascending] order by their importance. Nothing more needs to be said other than this: read the studies below!

Crimes against humanity? Unpacking the North Korean Human Rights Debate

https://www.academia.edu/6296645/Crimes_against_humanity_Unpacking_the_North_Korean_Human_Rights_Debate

North Korean Human Rights by Christine Hong

https://sci-hub.tw/10.1080/14672715.2013.851152

Nutrition and Health in North Korea: What's New, What's Changed and Why It Matters (excellent paper by Hazel Smith)

https://www.academia.edu/25554321/Nutrition_and_Health_in_North_Korea_Whats_New_Whats_Changed_and_Why_It_Matters

North Korea as the Wicked Witch of the East: Social Science as Fairytale

https://www.academia.edu/6130295/North_Korea_as_the_Wicked_Witch_of_the_East_Social_Science_as_Fairy_Tale